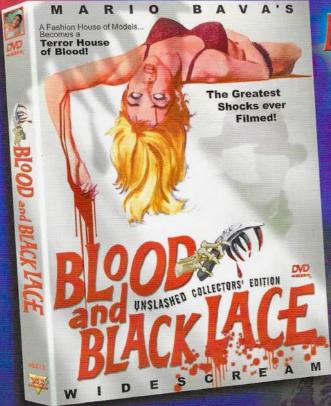


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Features and Departments

- 4 Scarlet Letters
- 12 Frankly Scarlet
- 13 Forrest J Ackerman's Crimson Chronicles
- 18 The News Hound
- 20 Jeff Wayne's The War of the Worlds
- 22 Screen and Screen Again
- 28 A Location to Die For . . . Midsomer Murders
- 31 Karloff and Lugosi on DVD
- 32 Val Lewton and the Cinema of Despair
- 37 No Bones to Pick: Russell Wade
- 38 Recollections of Simone Simon
- 46 Of Rhubarbs and Oranges
- 49 In Search of Rhubarb
- 52 Murder Will Out: Chad Allen
- 56 Blonde Heat: Virginia Mayo
- 61 Lessons From Lewton: Robert Wise
- 62 Sisters, Sisters: Elizabeth Russell
- 65 The Val Lewton Collection
- 68 Book Ends
- 81 Classifieds

COVER: Simone Simon and the World of Val Lewton (Tom Amorosi and Ted A. Bohus)

On the dark and stormy night that was the eve of the publication of Scarlet Street #53, which featured my Monstrous Musi-CALS article, it came to my attention that there was, in fact, a musical stage adaptation of H. G. Wells' The Invisible Man. It was kind of Off-Broadway-opening and closing in Portland, Oregon, in mid-1987. It was adapted by Lesley Conger (who also directed) and Ted Deane, with music by Steve Schaubel, Jamie Eoff, and Fred Chalenor. Joseph Cronin may or may not have been seen as the title figure. (At least his name headed the cast.)

On a "phantom" note, mention might have been made of the wonderfully wry vignette from Rod Serling on his NIGHT GALLERY. The sequence, which lasted under four minutes, was called "The Phantom of What Opera?" and featured Leslie Nielsen as the masked phantom pounding away at his pipe organ in his sewer lair, being furtively approached from behind by actress Mary Ann Beck, who reaches out and rips off his mask. He turns to expose his disfigured face and screams when he sees hers—equally disfigured. Alvin Marill

Glen Rock, NJ

I have just finished reading Issue #53 of Scarlet Street and loved it! I especially enjoyed reading about Richard Valley and Tom Amorosi's visit to "Uncle Forry" Ackerman. I met him on several occasions at the "old" Ackermansion. I have not seen the mini-mansion yet.

It was also interesting to read what other people think about the Classic Creatures DVD reissues featuring The Creature from the Black Lagoon, The Mummy, and The Invisible Man. I have the set with the three busts of Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, and Lon Chaney Jr. I have very nearly all the issues of Famous Monsters of Filmland and most of Scarlet Street. I have a large collection of horror DVDs and VHS tapes. Keep publishing Scarlet Street and I (and many others) will keep buying it!

Dan Skopp Oak Creek WI

Thanx, Dan! We wouldn't expect you to keep buying Scarlet Street if we stopped publishing it, because it would probably be very hard to find. But you've really gotta get goin' on collecting those back issues . . .

1 I despise the new PHANTOM OF THE OPERA movie—the reason being I hate musicals! Why did they have to make a classic into a musical? The only PHAN-TOM OF THE OPERA movie I enjoy is the Lon Chaney version. This is how I imagine the Opera Phantom to be. I want to see a monster Opera Phantom, not a handsome guy in a half mask.

I am looking forward to the return of KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER.

Kolchak stories live on right now in comic books. The comic books stories have whet my appetite, but now I am ready to move onto new episodes. Kolchak has an exciting legacy. That legacy is the fact that Kolchak was the inspiration for THE X-FILES!

Rosemarie Roberts Sacramento, CA 95831

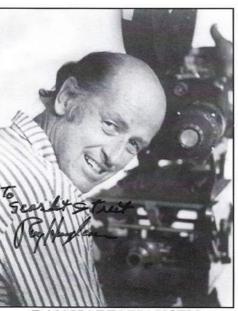
Rosemarie, you'd be surprised at how many people go through life half-masked. As to why they had to make a classic into a musical—it beats me. I mean, look at the mess they made of PYGMALION when they turned it into MY FAIR LADY!

The Virginia Mayo interview in Scarlet Street #53 made me very happy. I've been a fan ever since I saw THE PRIN-CESS AND THE PIRATE and WHITE HEAT on the same day at a film tribute and marveled at her beauty and versatility. Kudos to Todd Livingston for asking all the right questions and to Scarlet Street for printing them.

Mary Thomas Philadelphia, PA

The latest issue (Scarlet Street #53) is super. Being a musical theater maven, one who openly disliked the stage version of Lloyd-Webber's PHANTOM OF THE OPERA yet was moved by the film version, I thought it my bounden duty to point out yet one other stage version of Leroux' classic: THE PHANTOM OF THE OPRY.

WANTED! MORE KONG LOVERS LIKE...



RAY HARRYHAUSEN



Yep, you guessed it; it's the Grand Ole Opry, as in Nashville (not Altman's), as in country and western. This little musical has been playing around the U.S. as frequently as those nutty nuns in NUNSENSE get into their habits! (Appropriately enough, a production is being mounted in October at the Virginia Sandford Theater in Birmingham, Alabama, just in time for Halloween). Written by BRADY BUNCH scribe, Lloyd J. Schwartz, this PHANTOM sets the tale at a famous country-music hall and includes such favorite down-home tunes as "Your Cheatin' Heart," Good Lookin'," "I've Got Friends in Low Places," "Rhinestone Cowboy," and many more. While young Chrissy and Ronnie explore their romance, Chrissy is secretly pursued by her mysterious music teacher who lives in the labyrinth beneath the Opry house. This delightfully chilling musical is a must see for country-music fans and theater buffs alike! (Well, at least that's what the press releases have promised.)

Anthony Dale Cheswick, PA

I'm completely bowled over to be so fortunate to see some of the pix I'd taken at Forry's Birthday Bash actually published in the latest issue of Scarlet Street—and most in full color! I must say, I really like how you were able to black out that "yahoo" standing behind Ann Robinson. I liked the shot, too, except for that guy-couldn't get rid of him! This is when I can safely say how much I love computers. Most of the time, I'm not so thrilled.

If that wasn't enough, to actually have my name mentioned—twice yet (!), not only by the publisher but by making a cameo appearance in the one and only Dr. Acula's Crimson Chronicles!

Thank you, Forry and Joe Moe-and thanks so much, Richard! I enjoyed so much meeting you all and I couldn't think of a better place to do it either. You are all kind gentle giants in my book.

John Stoskopf Dearborn, MI

Scarlet Street #53 was another shining triumph for all concerned! I loved the issue's cover, stylistically recalling the horror mags of yesteryear, and the overview of the various film adaptations



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TERROR BENEATH THE SEA (1966)

Sonny Chiba (Kill Bill, Vol. 1, The Street Fighter) battles with an evil scientist, to save the world from being overrun by killer fishmen! From director Hajime Sato (Goke, Body Snatcher from Hell).



COLLEGE GIRL MURDERS [1967]

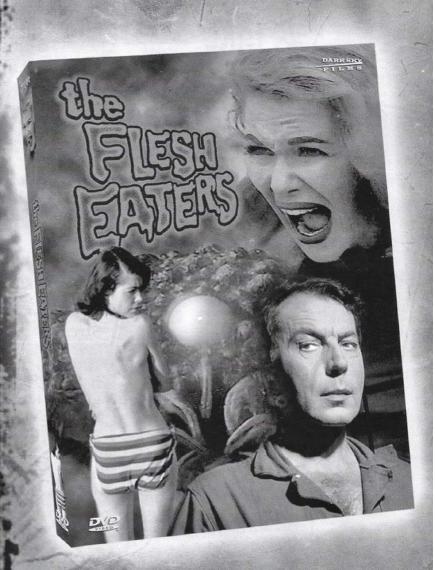
From the creative mind of Edgar Wallace (King Kong), this groovy adaptation is complete with killer mad monks, sinister schoolmasters, and a bevy of groovalicious co-eds.



WITHOUT WARNING (1952)

"All blonde... All beautiful... All bait..."

Adam Williams (North by Northwest) brandishes a pair of shiny pruning shears in this lost noir film from the 1952.



THE FLESH EATERS [1964]

"There's something in that water that eats flesh!"
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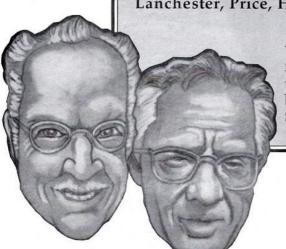
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—Forrest J Ackerman



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-Zacherley, the Cool Ghoul

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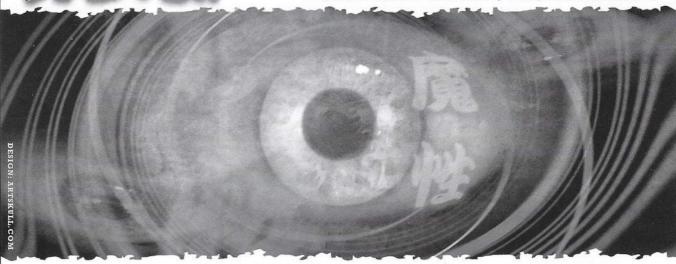
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SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 4

featuring Leroux's melancholy haunter of subterranean Paris. In Joel Schumacher's THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, we at last have a genre film worthy to join the august ranks of BRIDE OF FRANK-ENSTEIN and THE BLACK CAT—a simply stunning combination of beautiful music and grand drama, with a dash of Grand Guignol to top things off.

Richard Valley's interview with Schu-

Richard Valley's interview with Schumacher was a very illuminating examination of this leading directorial light. And, by the way, I'm sure we're all eagerly waiting for Richard's contribution to the upcoming Kolchak: The Night Stalk-

er Chronicles anthology.

The look at monster-themed musicals was thoroughly fascinating, and I dare say the type of thing one would only encounter in the pages of Scarlet Street. I still remember the marvelous night I attended a performance of Andrew Lloyd Webber's PHANTOM at Cincinnati's Aronoff Center, wherein Ted Keegan donned the pearly-white half-mask—a

memory to be treasured forever!

It was an unmitigated delight to hear from Forrest J. Ackerman, The Grand Potentate of Fandom (it's official!), once again. What it must be like to have 88 years worth of fantastic movie memories in your mind! To have known the likes of Karloff, Lugosi, Price, and Lorre! To have encountered such an incredible range of talented and idiosyncratic individuals—FJA knew everybody from Fritz Lang to Ed Wood! I'm glad to see that the Ackermonster has found a home in these hallowed pages.

Earl Roesel Newport, KY Earl, a regular visitor to our Message Boards, has progressed from fan to contributor. You'll find his article, VAL LEWTON: THE CINEMA OF DESPAIR, on Page 32.

I really enjoyed the latest issue of Scarlet Street (#53). I've always thought that Chaney's Phantom makeup was one of the greatest, most effective uses of greasepaint and putty ever accomplished on the silver screen. Your cover has to be one of my all-time favorites, and it brought back fond memories of the old FM covers. 4E's CRIMSON CHRONICLES also helped keep those warm memories alive and kicking (just like Dr. Acula himself).

I don't know if anyone else noticed, but I laughed out loud at the HONEY-MOONERS reference on Page 77 in the BLADE RUNNER photo caption. Who can I thank for bringing that classic television moment to mind?

The Virginia Mayo interview certainly left us wanting more ("... I knew too much about Danny [Kaye] and Laurence Olivier.") Even though the article is "Concluded Next Issue," I have a feeling that she's not going to go into any more detail about the subject, out of respect for Danny's daughter Dena.

The DVD reviews were great as usual, but they always end up costing me money. You make the movies sound so good, that I usually buy one or more of the DVDs featured. I think that I may have to buy THE MAN WHO LAUGHS based on the excellent review.

Scarlet Street is still the best magazine on the market. You guys do a Phantastic job. Keep up the good work!

Mark Daughtrey Lexington, VA De?

Scarlet Street #53 contained far more than the recommended daily allowance of well-written, -researched, and interesting material about films and genres I both know well and am relatively unfamiliar with.

That said, I was somewhat disappointed by the study of PHANTOM OF THE OPERA. Perhaps I have already read too much on the subject, but there seemed to be very little new information. I would have enjoyed more detail and pictures of the "lesser" versions of PHANTOM OF THE OPERA which the article mentioned. I have never read before of any Asian versions of the story and had only seen passing mentions of the Spanish version entitled PHANTOM OF THE OPERETTA. I wish the article could have featured some photographs of any of these lesser-known PHANTOMs. I recall Jack Cassidy's costume and makeup for THE PHANTOM OF HOLLYWOOD as having been quite impressive, for example. The shot of Rains in his acidscarred makeup was quite new to me, however, and very interesting.

In black-and-white, Rains' makeup does seem tame, as critics of that film often claim. A color photo would demonstrate its power more effectively, I suspect. I think Jack Pierce's use of red and blue and the Technicolor photography are key elements of what I have always considered a very effective makeup in watching the film itself. Rains' visage isn't as horrible as Chaney's or Lom's, but I wouldn't want to wake up looking like the 1943 Phantom, either.

It's a shame that Hammer doesn't seem to have taken more than a couple of stills of Lom in his makeup. I have always thought that it was one of Roy Ashton's best creations, particularly that horrible, shriveled eye.

I haven't finished reading the entire issue yet, but absolutely my favorite article so far has been the one on horror musicals. I had no idea that there were so many. Does anyone know a good resource on the web or elsewhere for picking up CDs of any of these shows?

I saw a rather lavish ballet of DRAC-ULA in, of all places, Boise, Idaho, several years ago. It was a touring production and I presume one of those mentioned in the article. The set was brilliant: a three-faced, tall, craggy, very narrow pyramid which could be simply turned to set the stage as Castle Dracula, Seward's asylum, or a generic setting. What was most striking about the production was that one of the Count's three "Brides" was a shirtless, gorgeous young man. This musclebound ballet boy was right in there pitching as the Brides went to work on the hunky Harker. To Boise's credit, no one batted an eye and the review didn't even mention

the male concubine's presence.

I had a copy of Chris de Burgh's HUNCHBACK score on audiocassette for quite a while. (It was sadly lost in "The Case of the Stolen Gym Bag and My Sweaty Workout Clothes" incident.) It was a little confusing until I realized that de Burgh and a woman were singing all the characters. It's a simple concept album (I think all the music is done

on synthesizer), but very enjoyable. I recommend picking it up if you ever see it.

A couple of other monster musicals worthy of mention:

The version of CHRISTMAS CAROL that ran for several years in New York and made it to television in a surprisingly decent form with Kelsey Grammer is a lot of fun. It definitely plays up the story's Gothic angles, especially in the scenes involving Marley's Ghost and Scrooge's grim future. Marley's song "Link by Link" is particularly clever. In the television version, Geraldine Chaplin was a haunting and unique Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come.

Years ago, Bobby "Boris" Pickett wrote an affectionate musical paean to Universal Horrors entitled I'M SORRY, THE BRIDGE IS OUT. YOU'LL HAVE TO SPEND THE NIGHT. I saw it on video as MONSTER MASH with Pickett as Dr. Frankenstein (doing his patented Karloff impersonation). Several songs referred to by Don Glut in The Frankenstein Legend and Monsters of the Movies magazine didn't appear in the film. It's a low budget exercise. Still, it's fun and well worth a rental.

While Brecht/Weill's THE THREE-PENNY OPERA isn't exactly a horror story, it certainly skirts the edges of gaslit melodramas. Golan-Globus managed to bring together quite a remarkable cast (Roger Daltry as the Street Singer, Richard Harris as Peachum, and Raoul Julia as Macheath, among others) for their obscure film version and seem to have invested quite a few bucks in the project. I don't recall it ever having played in theaters. I just stumbled upon it one day in a Blockbuster Video, in the "Musicals" section under the title MACK THE KNIFE. I highly recommend it.

If, on the other hand, you ever see the musical WUTHERING HEIGHTS sitting in the discount bin of your local used CD store (as I did), leave it there (as I didn't). The "WU" should definitely be replaced with an "WI" or a "DI."

Kevin Connell Portland, OR

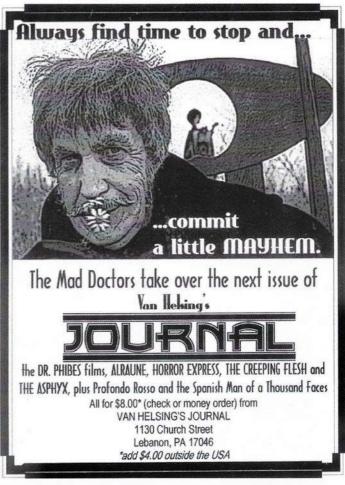
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I am so fortunate to have found your magazine. The writing and the content are just priceless, and it is so nice to see that there are quite a few people who are passionate about these movies!

I love the old horrors, but my favorites are the film noirs. I was reading the Scarlet Street Message Boards about the favorite noir quotes, and I just have to add one of my own. In THE BIG SLEEP, Agnes says to Marlowe, "Wish me luck, copper, I got a raw deal," to which Marlowe responds, "Your kind always does, sister"—or something to that effect. It's just awesome.

That said, I have been voraciously reading the new issue (SS #53), and I am ecstatic to see Part One of the interview





Frankly Scarlet

Triestings, faithful Scarlet Streeters!
This latest edition of your tavorite magazine has Passies Galore—and I don't mean a plethora of Honor Blackmans. That's just my sly way of saying that Scarlet Street #54 is destined to be the Issue of Choice for Cat People—Cat People on our neck of the fence being not only folks

into them

Felines and Film have been sympatice a long, long time, as anyone who's ever seen THE BLACK CAT (1934), BRINGING UP BABY (1938), DR. CYCLOPS (1940), PINOCCHIO (1940), THE JUNGLE BOOK (1942, 1967, and 1994), THIS GUN FOR HIRE (1942), LADY AND THE TRAMP (1955), BELL BOOK AND CANDLE (1958), THE FLY (1958), SHADOW OF THE CAT (1961), THE THREE LIVES OF THOMASINA (1964), THAT DARN CAT! (1965), BORN FREE (1966), THE WRONG BOX (1966), TORTURE GARDEN (1967), THE ARISTOCATS (1970), THE CAT CREATURE (1973), HARRY AND TONTO (1974), CAT'S FYE (1985), and JELPERS CREEPERS (2001), among many others, will meow.

Then there's that peccant puss belonging to Ernst Stavro Blofeld—a man with an ugly puss all his own—in the lames Bond actioners. (That's Donald Pleasence as Blofeld in 1967's YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE pictured on this page.) And the killer known as

(1927, 1930, 1939, 1979) of John Willard's Broadway thriller THE CAT AND THE CANARY (1922)

True, we can't cover all these films in a single issue, so I've chosen two purriect icons on which to tocus: that early in-



If s the Scarlet Street Gang posing for a post-dinner picture at last June's Monster Bash convention: Bill Diamond, Cortlandt Hull, Dennis Vincent (striped shirt), John Paul Chockett (blue shirt), Joe Moe (brown shirt), Al Paige, Harry Long (Hawaiian shirt), Richard Valley, Tom Amorosi (white shirt), Michael Cornett, Terry Pace (black shirt), Forrest J Ackerman, Susan (ATTACK OF THE PUPPET PEOPLE) Gordon, Don Mankowski, Ron Morgan (pink—uh, purple—uh, colorful shirt), Ken Hanke, Arlene Domkowski, and Farnham Scott.

stance of French Sex Kittenism, Simone Simon, who started in the Val Lewton classics CAI PEOPLE (1942) and THE CURSE OF THE CAI PEOPLE (1944), and Orangey (otherwise known as Rhubarb), the tabby who "endeared" himself to Basil Rathbone by getting better billing than the veteran actor for THE COMEDY OF TERRORS (1964).

When Simone Simon died earlier this year, I figured our chances of winning an interview with the lovely star had departed with her. I'd reckoned without the strange short-sight-

Warner Bros. was busy preparing. THE VAL LEW-TON COLLECTION for DVD release. When writer/producer actor Roy Frumkes, who was friends with simon for a decade and recorded some 0 hours of concretations of formal Wayners (board Wayner

material, he was ignored in favor of a film historian who'd spoken to the actress only once. That's why you'll be reading Roy's fascinating Recording tools of Sixoni in \$5 #54, complete with tasty tidbits from those hours and hours of telephone conversations.

Savor this issue of Scarlet Street. We've got kitty littered all over our pages. It's catnip and cream for all those slinky souls lunking within our earthly (leeb

In his CRIMSON CHRONICLES column for this issue. Forest I Ackerman makes

note of the yearly Monster Bash convention in Pennsylvania and what has become a Saturday night tradition: dinner with the Scarlet Street gang. If you'd like fo put laces with the names of some our writers and message board members, check the photo and caption at the top of this page.

Back in the mid-fifties, Confidential magazine was going to out Rock Hudson. The actor was on the verge of becoming the most popular male star in Hollywood. He was too valuable a commodity to be detailed by revelations of his homosexuality—though it would hardly have been a revelation to anyone in the film industry. A deal was struck to suppress the story—Rory Calhoun (a former felon) and Tab Hunter (busted at a gay party) were sacrificed instead—and it was quickly arranged for the slippery Rock to marry and squelch the gay rumors.

That was half a century ago, and things in Hallywood haven't really changed much. On the other hand:

I was chatting with actor Chad Allen earlier today, and we spoke about the supermarket tabloid *The Globe* outing him 10 years ago by running photos of him kissing another guy in a hot tub. Chad, who was starring on TV in DR. QUINN MEDICINE WOMAN at the time, told me that the immediate reaction of "his people" was to arrange for him to have a very public girlfriend.

Chad refused, so maybe some things do change. For people brave enough to change them ... Richard

Valley







Great Scots! Twas' (Burnt) Booty (Nearly) Kilt This Beast!

I saw the original KING KONG in 1933. A 15-year-old me was blown away! My little mind couldn't believe it. Later in life, I met the actor who appears in the beginning of the film, Sam Hardy, in a drugstore. I was thrilled to meet someone associated with KING KONG.

Next, I met and befriended dear Marcel Delgado. Since he had built King Kong in the first place, I thought it would be just great if I could take a model of Kong on my legendary, cross-country road trip to meet the fans of Famous Monsters of Filmland magazine. Who better to create this than the man who built Kong in the first place? I went to Delgado and gave him a \$1,000 check and he started to make a miniature model of Kong holding me in his hand. But he finally came to me and said, "I just don't have it anymore. I can't create your Kong." Toward the end of his life, he fell and injured his head and it seemed to have knocked out all memory of his participation in KONG. The last time I ever saw him, I was complimenting him and reminding him of what he had accomplished. My wife was with me and this dear Mexican man was a gentleman to the end. He rose from his chair to bid my wife goodbye. Never met Willis O'Brien, but his

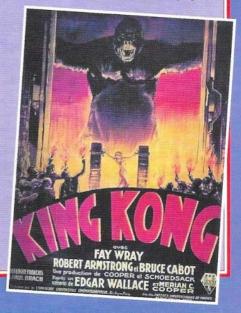
Never met Willis O'Brien, but his wife, Darlene, took me to Forest Lawn Cemetery and showed me his crypt.

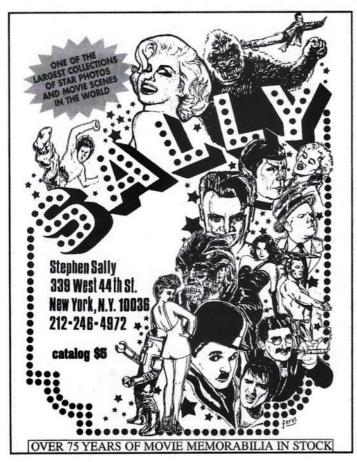
I had my doubts from the very beginning that the De Laurentiis (two "i's" in his name and I'd like to poke both of them out)! KING KONG of the seventies could be any good. When it finally came out, I watched it for free . . . I still wanted my money back! I called it "King Wrong!" For one thing, there were no dinosaurs in it. That would be like making the Frank Sinatra story and never having Ol' Blue Eyes sing!

Basically, I'm not in favor of remaking classics, but if anyone had to remake KONG, I think Peter Jackson was born to revive the King of Skull Island. Having seen the trailer, my appetite has been whetted. I'm looking forward to possibly being present in New

York to see the premier showing of Peter Jackson's KONG. Back in 1933, the original KONG generated such excitement in New York that two major theaters had to show it simultaneously in order to accommodate the crowds. I wouldn't be surprised if cinematic history is duplicated in 2005.

Cheeri-o from Glasgow, Scotland! In the beginning of August, I flew over land and sea to arrive in Scotland at the SEC Center for the 64th World Science Fiction Convention. As some





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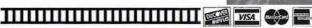
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SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 11

with my favorite all-time actress, Virginia Mayo—such an underated, versatile actress. I am happy because it seems that she led an overall happy life, as opposed to some of her contemporaries.

What is amazing to me is living in New York and having the opportunity to see some of these gems on the big screen. In Astoria, Queens, at the Museum of the Moving Image, they are currently running a tribute to Raoul Walsh. Naturally, one of the films they will be screening is WHITE HEAT. I've seen it twice already, but I look forward to seeing it again and taking my friend with me.

I am also an aspiring film writer. I hope to one day know enough and have seen enough to be able to write intelligently and critically about these films. I am kinda new to these films. I have been a fan for about 12 years, since I was 12 years old, but I have only really really really been zealous about them during the past few years. I have ordered some of the back issues of Scarlet Street, and I must thank you, Mr. Valley, for one of the comments that you wrote in your monthly column. I believe it appeared in the issue that fea-tured the Fay Wray interview by Rick McKay, which by the way, was so beautiful (both in the writing and in that it was so heartfelt-also liked the author's tribute article to her). Anyway, you wrote something to the effect that there's always something new to write about old movies. That gives me a lot

of hope, because sometimes it seems as if all bases have been covered. But I think it is interesting to read different takes and opinions on the same film.

Jonathan Forte New York, NY

52

Jon Anthony Carr's compelling review of THE OUTLAW (Scarlet Street #53) brought the thought: Was there ever a more legendary "Sex Western?" Some sources inform you that Howard Hughes "found" Jack Buetel in a bed-



room in "a bad part of town" along with three other young men/roommates. The official explanation seems to be that Buetel was one of five finalists for his role—Jane Russell was also one of five finalists for her role—and that the director, Howard Hawks, told them that they had been selected for the roles of Billy the Kid and Rio.

Hawks and his crew went to the location site in Tuba City, Arizona. Hawks had insisted that Hughes stay behind in California. Hawks was very much interested in Buetel's "cocky insouciance" and filmed him in a straightforward, spontaneous manner. Hughes, who insisted on seeing the dailies on a dayto-day basis, took a violent dislike to Hawks' handling of Buetel. He wanted to refashion Buetel into a "love object." (Hughes was well known for his bisexuality in Hollywood—some of his famous lovers were Randolph Scott, Cary Grant, Tyrone Power, and Richard Cromwell.) Hughes fired Hawks and returned the entire company to California. (Hawks claimed that he only worked on the film for two weeks.)

Once he took over the directorial reins, Hughes became obsessed with bringing out the sexual possibilities in Jules Furthman's screenplay. He also coerced Buetel into a sexual relationship. (Reportedly, Buetel was a heterosexual who wanted to be in the movies and couldn't pass on such a "golden opportunity.") Hughes got deeper and deeper into "the kink factor" in the material and became fixated on filming the same scene—even the tiniest gesture—again and again. When he finished in February of 1941, he had shot an unheard-of 450,000 feet of film, which he eventually reedited into about 10,000 feet. He had also spent an unheard-of three million on a small-scale Western.

When Hughes submitted the film to Joseph Breen for a ratings approval, Breen banned the picture outright. Supposedly, Breen wanted about 100 cuts and Hughes wasn't willing to make them. He simply put the film away in a vault and continued to work on it at

his leisure. Eventually, he decided to release the film in San Francisco for a test run. Advertisements proclaimed that Buetel and Russell would perform "a deleted scene" onstage. (Some sources inform us that this supposedly "hot coupling" never made it to the stage; others tell us that the scene was so "hot" that the police had to shut it down.) After eight weeks, Hughes decided to withdraw the film from further distribution. Later, in 1946, he finally agreed to a censored version and released the film on a national and worldwide basis-but he still found the time to bring a lawsuit against the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America for interfering with his proudly sexual Western.

Fired from THE OUTLAW, Hawks said he wanted to work with Buetel and Russell again. In the late forties, when he was preparing RED RIVER, he decided he wanted Buetel to play Matthew Garth. (The role went to Montgomery Clift.) With all the uproar over THE OUTLAW, Buetel was definitely a name actor and RED RIVER would have made him a genuine star. But Hughes had Buetel under an exclusive contract (he paid him only \$150 a week) and wouldn't loan Buetel out to Hawks.

Whatever Hughes' reasons-Hughes liked his men "soft" and perhaps Buetel

wasn't sufficiently compliant-he killed Buetel's chance at true stardom. Once Buetel freed himself of his association with Hughes and the negative connotation of being Hughes' sex toy, he appeared in a number of B Westerns and the TV series JUDGE ROY BEAN. Thereafter, Buetel faded into obscurity and died in the late eighties.

The Hughes/Buetel story is one of Hollywood's strangest. (It's even rumored that there exists in Hughes' private collection a largely nude version of THE OUTLAW!) Maybe someday some enterprising film historian will tell us the whole story.

Raymond Banacki Brooklyn, NY

Jeepers, I wonder why this info never found its way into THE AVIATOR?

I had the most wonderful afternoon yesterday. My box set of Hammer Horrors arrived and at last I was able to watch THE BRIDES OF DRACULA on DVD! Wow! I shut down the work factory, poured myself a single malt, collected some cashew nuts and raisins, and settled down to view. I was in eighth heaven. (I'd been in seventh heaven with Basil and the remastered SCARLET CLAW.) It is a wonderful film-purple bits and all (as mentioned on the SS

Message Boards). Notice how Martita Hunt changes from black and red to purple before going to bed! I follow the same routine, but God, those bruises stop one from sleeping!

It is a film I can watch over and over again. And I see something new every time. Watching it yesterday, I was struck by how many outfits Cushing/ Van Helsing had with him-three overcoats, at least, and three hats and I think four different suits. What a dapper fellow and what a packer! To get all those clothes into such a small bag without any creasing—unless he had the clothes knocked up quickly in the village. "Thank heavens you've come, my son. My tailoring business was seriously faltering: just the occasional shroud."

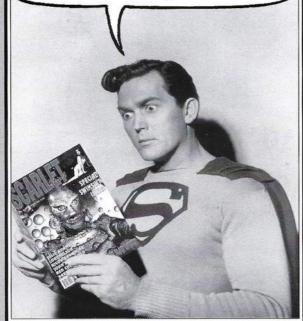
But seriously, folks, what a wonderfully atmospheric film.

David Stuart Davies Huddersfield, England

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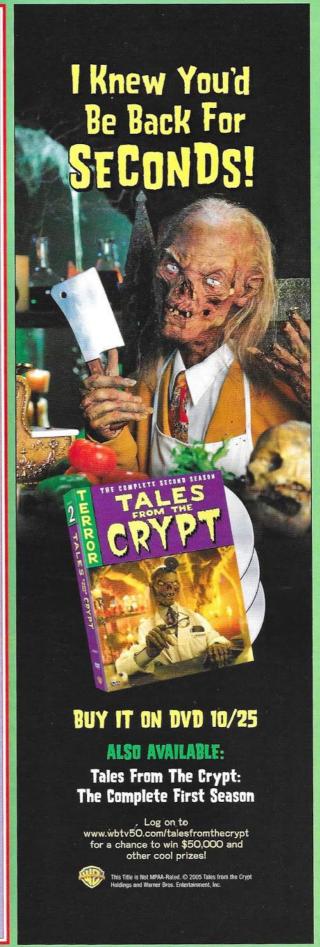
Continued from page 13 of you may know, I was at the first World Con and have only missed four out of 64. (Sigh!) Technically, I have now missed five! The Celtic Vampires got hold of me, poking and bleeding me for over two weeks. The very first day of the Con, I burned my behind while taking an early morning hot shower. I was rushed to the emergency room at the Royal Infirmary and that's just where I spent my entire UK trip. Luckily, the medical staff assured me that my mishap was coincidental to my advancing age, so I'm relieved I'll be able to travel and visit with all of you in the future.

The Scottish Interaction World Con team was very accommodating and checked in on me even two weeks after the Con was over and 20,000 bag pipers for the World Piper Competitions replaced Sci-Fi fans. Friends Joe Moe, Lee Byrns, and Jessica White stayed by my side through my entire ordeal. Friend and artist John Goss held down the fort back home. He also gave me a new METROPOLIS book inscribed: "Remember, Forry, Med-Trouble-Ass is always better than Rot-Wang!" Anyway, my view of Scotland was confined to what I could see out my window in the Infirmary: The Necropolis. Crypts, tombs and gravestones-encouraging, huh?

This year's ComicCon was one of the most memorable since the very first one that I helped inaugurate. I was delighted to see John Landis in an audience of 200 when I gave my hour-long speech telling anecdotes about Karloff, Lugo-

si, Carradine, George Pal, Fritz Lang, and others of the imagimovie genre. John's wife and famous costumer, Deborah (IN-DIANA JONES, AN AMERI-CAN WEREWOLF IN LON-DON) was in attendance to conduct the first Costumers Guild Panel with fellow guild member James Acheson (SPI-DERMAN and the original DR. WHO). Later, John introduced me to genre director David Croenenberg. Finally, I was thrilled to be in the company of my lifelong pals Ray Bradbury and Ray Harryhausen, on the stage before a packed audience fending questions and volunteering anecdotes. We were like kids in our wheelchairs racing through the back corridors and kitchens of the massive San Diego convention center. Bradbury biographer Sam Weller did a great job of moderating our panel. I can't believe we're growing so old together. Aside from all of us being in wheelchairs some of the time (see photo this page), I could barely hear what was going on and Ray Bradbury was dozing on stage. After the panel, we signed autographs for hundreds of appreciative fans.

Monster Bash still ranks as the most family-friendly, good-spirited monster event on Earth. Ron Adams, his family, and staff really pull out all the stops to bring entertainment and camaraderie to fans and pros alike in a little corner of Pennsylvania once a year. It's like a yearly vacation among family and friends who share your passions and loves. This year, I was happy to be reunited with pal and FM





HOUND

Velcome, Scarlet Wanderers, to The Hound's Side of the Street, where you'll encounter elicitations of enjoyable entertainment events for the holidays, the New Year, and beyond . .

Theatrical Thrills

The late, great Fay Wray's tall, dark leading man is back! KING KONG returns to the big screen in December in a remake from triple Oscar-winning producer/ director Peter Jackson. Naomi Watts plays Miss Wray's part of Ann Darrow, the out-of-work Depression-era actress who takes a life-changing lead role for producer Carl Denham (comic actor Jack Black). The Universal release also features Adrien Brody, Kyle Chandler, and London-bred actor Andy Serkis-who plays the role of Mr. Kong within a digital motion-capture technique similar to that used for his turn as Gollum in Jackson's LORD OF THE RINGS trilogy.

Also in December, Disney presents THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE, a lavish feature version of the first book in C.S. Lewis' sevenvolume fantasy epic The Chronicles of Narnia, published between 1950 and 1956. Tilda Swinton and Jim Broadbent are among the human performers in this live action/animated adventure; Liam Neeson and Rupert Everett are among those giving voice to the CGI lions and beavers and dwarves. (Oh, my!)

Woody Allen forsakes his beloved Manhattan for London in MATCH POINT (DreamWorks/BBC Films), a change-of-pace comedy-drama about wealth, ambition, and sex among the young British upper crust. The film stars Scarlett Johansson, Brian Cox, and Jonathan Rhys-Meyers (the Dublin-born star of last May's ELVIS miniseries).

More December features: Broadway bilkers Bialystock and Bloom (Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick) sing while they scheme in Mel Brooks' THE PRO-DUCERS: THE MOVIE MUSICAL from Universal . . . Charlize Theron portrays lithe, leather-clad sci-fi secret agent AEON FLUX in the Paramount actioner based on the MTV animated series . . . CROUCHING TIGER costars Ziyi Zhang and Michele Yeoh keep the kung-fu to a minimum in MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA from CHICAGO director Rob Marshall The shocking true story behind the

Little Red Riding Hood saga is finally revealed in the animated comedy HOOD-WINKED from producer/director brothers Todd and Cory Edwards. The homegrown CGI feature includes such eclectic voice talents as Andy Dick, Sally Struthers, and David Ogden Stiers.

Upcoming Attractions

Coming ashore in January: Captain John Smith (Colin Farrell) and his 17th-century European posse reach THE NEW WORLD (New Line Cinema), guided by director Terrence Malick. Christian Bale and Christopher Plummer costar . . . Kate Beckinsale vamps it up in the action-horror sequel UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION (Screen Gems). This werewolf vs. vampire rematch is once again staged by Kate's spouse, writer/director Len Wiseman . . . Calling all babysitters: Screen Gems and director Simon West deliver the February remake WHEN A



Alfred Hitchcock flips us THE BIRDS and 13 more of his masterworks in THE MASTERPIECE COLLECTION from Universal.

STRANGER CALLS . . . Universal offers the quaintly nondigital animated tale of that cheeky little monkey CURIOUS GEORGE . . . Still more teenagers fear the reaper in CHEATING DEATH: FI-NAL DESTINATION 3 (New Line) from returning producer/directors (and X FILES alums) Glen Morgan and James Wong . . . Steve Martin has the daunting task of filling Peter Sellers' flatfooted gumshoes in MGM's remake of THE PINK PANTHER. Kevin Kline and Kristen Chenowith provide comedic life support.

Future Features

Famed turn-of-the-20th-century magician Harry Houdini spent many feverish hours trying to get out of tight boxes. But it's the opposite activity

that's explored in the Houdini biopic DEATH DEFYING ACTS, which depicts Houdini's heated love affair during a tour of Scotland. The British/Australian coproduction is set to roll next year with Guy Pearce as Houdini and Rachel Weisz as his trick-er, his objet d'amour.

In the United Artists thriller THE WOODS, young Heather Fasulo doesn't much like being shipped off to that secluded boarding school. And she certainly can do without those nasty schoolmates who torment her. So, when her enemies begin to vanish one by one into the surrounding woodlands, you've got to think maybe she's picked up some wish-them-into-the-cornfield techniques from Billy Mumy. Patricia Clarkson and Bruce Campbell play the concerned mom and dad.

Luckily this never happened to Kol-chak: in the horror-noir thriller RISE, a reporter awakens in a city morgue to find that she has become a vampire. Carla Gugino stars as the newly undead journalist; Michael Chiklis and Lucy Liu costar. Sebastian Gutierrez directs and scripts this feature for Sam Raimi's Ghost House Productions.

<u>Déjà Views</u> INDIANA JONES 4 seems to be headed toward, if not the fast track, then the slow-and-steady track. Variety reported back in May that the latest screenplay by Jeff Nathanson has passed the muster of Misters George Lucas and Steven Spielberg. Harrison Ford gave a very public confirmation of his intention to re-don the battered fedora at June's AFI tribute to Lucas. Scuttlebutt has Spielberg clearing his slate for a summer 2006 start, following production this year on a planned biopic of Abraham Lincoln starring Liam Neeson. If all the ancient artifacts fall into place—Mr. Ford (at 65!) included—we may see Indy raid the cinemas again in early 2007.

Dissatisfied at being turned into a Stepford Wife, Nicole Kidman is seeking a more extraterrestrial transformation. She's set to play the lead in New Line Cinema's INVASION, a broad re-make of INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS. Kidman portrays a Washington D.C. psychiatrist whose young son may be crucial to preventing an alien invasion of earth. (If only she could keep him from playing with those damn pods!)

True to its mythology, there's just no killing the Highlander series. HIGH-LANDER: THE SOURCE has been an-





o you remember what you were doing when the Martians attacked Earth on October 30, 1938? No? That's when Orson Welles and his radio troupe MERCURY THEATRE ON THE AIR frightened a nation with a realistic-for-its-time invasion by malignant people eaters.

Do you remember what you were doing when the Martians attacked Earth on August 13, 1953? Yes, that's right—you were sitting in a picture palace watching the George Pal production THE WAR OF THE WORLDS.

Here's another . .

Do you remember what were you doing when the Martians attacked Earth in the summer of 1978? That's when JEFF WAYNE'S MUSICAL VER-SION OF THE WAR OF THE WORLDS

(its complete title) was released on LP and audio cassette, eventuallyamazingly-becoming the world's

bestselling musical work.

The double-disc vinyl album (remember those?) featured narration by Richard Burton (pictured with Wayne), music by Wayne (leader of the Electric Light Orchestra), and contributions by The Moody Blues' Justin Hayward, ROCK FOLLIES' Julie Covington, singer/composer/actor David Essex, Thin Lizzy vocalist Phil Lynott, guitarist Jo Partridge, and Manfred Mann's Earth Band member Chris Thompson. Thanks to renewed interest in the H. G. Wells saga generated by the release this year of Steven Spielberg's smash hit movie version, the recording was reissued worldwide this year in a deluxe CD package. The extensive set includes the original recording remixed in stereo and 5.1 Surround Sound, three CDs packed with rarities (including work by Burton, Hayward, Essex, and Lynott), a

CD of various remixes made from 1979 through 2005, a "making of" DVD, and an 80-page collector's book-everything, in fact, except a Martian!

As if that isn't enough, now plans have been announced for a real planetary invasion: a gargantuan live WOTW stage show, beginning its world tour in China in 2007 Arena audiences will witness attacks from life-sized Martian war machines and recitations by an immense hologram of the late Mr. Burton. Both of which sound scary as hell.

-The News Hound



SHADOWS: THE COMPLETE REVIVAL SERIES (Columbia-TriStar, \$39.95)

THE WIZARD OF OZ has finally received the deluxe treatment from Warner, available as two-disc special edition (\$26.99) and three-disc collector's edition (\$49.95), both with a ton of colorful extras including documentaries, screen tests, and extended sequences.

Also currently available on silver disc: WAR OF THE WORLDS: SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S EDITION (Paramount, \$14.99), DRACULA A.D. 1972 (Warner, \$19.98), GEORGE A. ROMERO'S LAND OF THE DEAD (Universal, \$29.98), LOONEY TUNES—GOLDEN COLLEC-TION, VOLUME 3 (Warner, \$64.98), and a massive set from Paramount-STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURES (20 discs, \$166.99), which contains all 10 features in two-disc special editions.

Other multi-disc sets, now available: ALFRED HITCHCOCK: THE MASTER-PIECE COLLECTION (Universal, 15 discs \$119.98; with a gift box and collectible book) contains Dolby Digital 2.0 Mono editions of SABOTEUR, SHADOW OF A DOUBT, ROPE, REAR WINDOW, THE TROUBLE WITH HARRY, THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH, VERTIGO (Dolby Digital 5.1 surround), PSYCHO, THE BIRDS, MARNIE, TORN CURTAIN, TOPAZ, FRENZY, FAMILY PLOT, and a bonus disc with three documentaries and the AFI salute to Hitch, which was broadcast on CBS in 1979

THE BEST OF ABBOTT AND COS-TELLO, VOLUME 4 (Universal, two discs, \$26.98) includes the ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET features DR. JEK-YLL AND MR. HYDE, THE KEYSTONE KOPS, and THE MUMMY, plus the 1965 docucompilation THE WORLD OF AB-

NEWS HOUND

Continued from page 18

nounced by franchise owner/operators Davis-Panzer Productions as the first of three new features starring those damned durable Immortals. Adrian Paul returns as Duncan McLeod, the role he's played since 1992 on TV and in the 2000 feature HIGHLANDER: ENDGAME. A 2006 release by Dimension Films is

planned.

Other sequels and remakes in the works: Johnny Depp, Keira Knightley, and Orlando Bloom shiver their timbers again in PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST, due in Summer 2006, followed by yet another sequel, shot at the same time, slated for 2007. I AM LEGEND, the third filming of Richard Matheson's 1954 novel, is due from CONSTANTINE director Francis Lawrence . . . Hold your breath (or don't) for SCREAM 4, CREEPSHOW 3, and the Fox remake THE OMEN 666.

Small Screen Scene

Charge up your little gray cells! David Suchet returns as that famously fastidious Belgian sleuth in four new installments of AGATHA CHRISTIE'S POIROT from coproducers Granada Television and A&E Networks. First up is THE MYSTERY OF THE BLUE TRAIN, based on Christie's sixth Poirot novel, published in 1928. Directed by U.K. stage and feature helmer Hettie MacDonald, it costars James D'Arcy and Elliot Gould. Next on the production schedule are adaptations of Cards on the Table (1936), Taken at the Flood (1948), and After the Funeral (1953). One probable disappointment for viewers is the absence of Captain Hastings (Hugh Fraser), Inspector Japp (Philip Jackson), and Miss Lemon (Pauline Moran), as these characters do not appear in any of the original stories. (That never stopped the producers from including them before.) Production began last spring on the latest quartet, and telecasts will likely begin this fall on both sides of the pond.

Italy's master of the macabre Dario Argento has been dubbed the European Hitchcock-and now he's created a feature in tribute to his muse. Argento's DO YOU LIKE HITCHCOCK? (TI PIACE HITCHCOCK) was produced for RAI Italian TV as part of an omnibus of eight Hitchcock homages. The telefilm shot in English, and featuring music by Pino Donaggio, is scheduled for a DVD release next year from Anchor Bay, but so far has not scored a showing on any U.S. cable channels.

The Home Video Vault

2005 has been a memorably haunted year for fans of classic ghost stories, as evidenced by the welcome DVD releases of THE HAUNTING (Warner Home Video, \$14.98), THE INNOCENTS (Fox, \$14.98) and THE CHANGELING (HBO, \$9.98)-and even a new colorized edition (what a gimmick!) of HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL (Fox, \$9.98), packaged with the black-and-white original. But where is THE UNINVITED (1944), Universal and/or Paramount? Perhaps with the added attraction of THE UNSEEN (1945), its (ahem) rarely seen followup?

Inquiring ghost hunters want to know.
Some long-awaited TV shows are now available in DVD boxed sets: the complete series of KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER (Universal, \$39.98), ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS: SEASON ONE (Universal, \$39.98), THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN: THE COMPLETE FIRST SEASON (Warner, \$39.98), AMERICAN THE COMPLETE SERIES GOTHIC: (MCA, \$49.98), and all 12 episodes of the wonderful 1991 NBC show DARK

BOTT & COSTELLO, the 1994 NBC-TV special ABBOTT & COSTELLO MEET JÉRRY SEINFELD, and David Skal's halfhour featurette ABBOTT & COSTELLO MEET THE MONSTERS from MCA's 2000 DVD release of ABBOTT AND COS-TELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN. Missing in action: It AIN'T HAY, the sole Bud and Lou starrer from Universal not to make it into any of the box sets. (C'mon, Universal; pay the two dollars!)

The Wicked Stage
"Funeral for a Fiend" and "Don't Let
the Sun Come Up on Me" will probably not be featured in Elton John and Bernie Taupin's new Broadway production LESTAT, set to turn the Great White Way crimson in March 2006. The production-based, of course, on novelist Anne Rice's Vampire Chronicles-has its world premiere on December 17 at San Francisco's Curran Theater for a six-week run prior to its East Coast debut. Starring as the lead vamp is Hugh Panaro, currently behind the mask as Broadway's PHANTOM. Also featured are Carolee Carmello as Gabrielle, Jack Noseworthy as Armand, and Jim Stanek as Louis. Rice is waxing ecstatic-and you know how painful that can be-saying in a published interview that the show is "the fulfillment of my deepest dreams." Considering Rice's dreams, Broadway should brace for a shock.

Mel Brooks plans to follow up his phenomenally successful musical restaging of THE PRODUCERS with a Broadway version of YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN. Matthew Broderick may portray the

title physician.

BARBARELLA, a stage musical based on the swinging sixties French comic strip by Jean Claude Forest, closed earlier this year after playing for six and a half months at Vienna's Raimund Theatre. Dave Stewart, longtime Eurythmics partner of Annie Lennox, composed the songs and score. Variety's review in

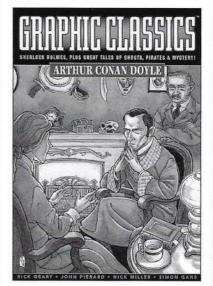
Bud Abbott and Lou Costello don't look too happy to have met Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Boris Karloff) on DVD for the first time.



spring of 2004 was unabashedly scathing, although it praised the showstopping number "I Want to Be Like Fred Astaire," performed by a dancing robot. There are no reports of any further BAR-BARELLA stagings, more's the pity.

Gone, but never to be forgotten: STAR TREK's James Doohan; actor and impressionist Frank Gorshin; ventriloquist, actor, and kids' show host Paul Winchell; producer/agent (and Judy Garland's third husband) Sid Luft; singer Luther Vandross; musician/orchestrators Michael Gibson and Joe Harnell; veteran nightclub entertainers Phil Ford and The Incomparable Hildegarde (Hildegarde Loretta Sell); Australian TV legend Graham Kennedy; comedian Freddy Soto; TV horror host Watson "Sivad" Davis; Broadway reporter and critic Mel Gussow; news anchor Peter Jennings; Hollywood columnist and broadcaster Shirley Eder; journalist and screenwriter Ed Kelleher; authors Shelby Foote, Evan Hunter ("Ed McBain"), Byron Preiss, and Judith Rossner; playwright and screenwriter Christopher Fry; magician Jay Marshall; Disney artists Joe Grant and Brian Wesley Green; cartoonist and animation designer Rowland B. Wilson; DC Comics artist Jim Aparo; illustrator David Sutherland; clay animator Bob Gardiner; special effects artist Phil Kellison; makeup artist Robert J. Schiffer; stuntman Eddie Smith; film composers David Diamond, Robert Farnon, and Jaime Mendoza-Nava; TV scripters Stanley H. Silverman and Danny Simon; voice actors Henry (Fred Flintstone) Corden and Thurl (Tony the Tiger) Ravenscroft; author, screenwriter, and actor Edward Bunker; TV writer/ producers Franklin Barton, Herb Sargent, and Herbert Wright; TV cartoon producer Norm Prescott; screenwriters Gavin Lambert and Ernest Lehman; producers Fernando Ghia, Ismail Merchant, and Charles A. Pratt; directors George P. Cosmatos, Guy Green, Alberto Lattuada, Bruce Malmuth, and Robert Wise; and actors Don Adams, Mason Adams, Eddie Albert, Leon Askin, Anne Bancroft, Barbara Bel Geddes, John Bennett, Paul Bettis, Michael Billington, Norman Bird, Ed Bishop, James Booth, John Bromfield, J. D. Cannon, Robert Clarke, Bob Denver, Richard Eastham, Dana Elcar, Stephen Elliott, Jason Evers, John Fiedler, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Suzanne Flon, Gretchen Franklin, Elisabeth Fraser, Anthony George, Ileen Getz, Kevin Hagen, June Haver, Ruth Hussey, Frances Langford, Mike Marshall, Lon McCallister, Pat Mc-Cormick, Sir John Mills, Constance Moore, Terence Morgan, Cherry Morris, Howard Morris, Brock Peters, Ford Rainey, Ron Randell, Eva Renzi, Maria Schell, John Seitz, Lane Smith, Lorna Thaver, Guy Thomajan, Jimmy Thompson, Geof-frey Toone, Harrison Young, George "Commando Cody" Wallace, Kay Walsh, and Mel Welles.

Send The Hound your questions, comments, and compliments via email to TheNewsHound@scarletstreet.com.



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Scarlet Street's DVD Reviews

HAMMER HORROR SERIES Universal-\$29.98

It's probably not news to Scarlet Streeters that, for one brief shining moment, there was an amazing British film company called Hammer Films and a now-legendary band of film artists collected by Sir James Carreras: producer and writer Anthony Hinds, writer James Sangster, scenic designer Bernard Robinson, director Terence Fisher, composer James Bernard, cinematographer Jack Asher, and that fine actor, Peter Cushing

At last, the entire library of Universal-International's Hammer releases-THE BRIDES OF DRACULA (1960), THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF (1961), THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (1962), NIGHT CREATURES (1962), THE KISS OF THE VAMPIRE (1963), PARANOIAC (1963), NIGHTMARE (1964), and EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN (1964)—are available in one glorious DVD collection. That's a total of eight films, and BRIDES



and WEREWOLF alone would be worth the price of the set. There is some cropping of the image on BRIDES, CURSE, and KISS, but the DVDs still make it possible to enjoy these remarkable films in greater detail and more vibrant color than ever before.

THE BRIDES OF DRACULA is arguably Hammer's finest film. The cast, led by Peter Cushing as Dr. Van Helsing and Martita Hunt as Baroness Meinster, is superb and features one of the most singular of screen bloodsuckers-David Peel as blonde, sexually ambiguous Baron Meinster. Able support is offered by Freda Jackson as the vampire's mortal nanny, "France's newest sex kitten" (as she was promoted) Yvonne Monlaur as the damsel in distress, and Andree Melly and Marie Devereux as the voluptuous brides.

Held in equally high regard-and also directed by Terence Fisher—is THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF, which launched the career of its brooding, intense young star, Oliver Reed. Roy Ashton's full-bodied and full-blooded makeup, though seen only in the rousing finale, quickly made this the screen's most memorable wolfman. Previously censored sequences are lovingly restored.

Oliver Reed also stars under Freddie Francis' direction in the modern-dress mystery thriller, PARANOIAC (1963), freely adapted by James Sangster from Josephine Tey's Brat Farrar (1949) and well presented in widescreen, with crisp blacks and whites. Francis also directs another black-and-white thriller, NIGHT-MARE (1964), and the third in the studio's Frankenstein series, EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN, with Peter Cushing as the Baron and Sandor Eles as his helping Hans.

Hammer's unjustly neglected remake of THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA features a fine performance by Herbert

Lom as the Opera Ghost. Lom scores even though his skullduggery is relegated to a dwarfish assistant (Ian Wilson) to render him more sympathetic. Edwin Astley provides a beautiful love theme echoed in his opera SAINT JOAN, well-voiced by singer Patricia Clark for Heather Sears as Christine.

THE KISS OF THE VAMPIRE, directed by Don Sharp and starring Clifford Evans, Edward de Souza, Noel Willman, and Jennifer Daniel, inspired Roman Polanski's later DANCE OF THE VAM-PIRES (1967). It features a wonderful musical score by James Bernard, whose 'Vampire Rhapsody" became justly famous. The plot echoes Universal's Boris Karloff/Bela Lugosi starrer THE BLACK CAT (1934), with a young married cou-ple (De Souza and Daniel) running afoul of a foul cult (devil worshippers in CAT, the undead in KISS).

Topping off this generous collection is the long-neglected NIGHT CREA-TURES, known everywhere else in the world as CAPTAIN CLEGG. Earlier adaptations of Russell Thorndyke's Doctor Syn (1915), a tale of smuggling on the Romney Marsh, were filmed in 1937 with George Arliss and 1964 with Patrick McGoohan. Peter Cushing's splendid, vigorous performance as the pirate turned preacher (here named Dr. Blyss) makes the role his own. The colorful adventure also features spirited performances from Hammer regular Michael Ripper in a rare major role. Oliver Reed and Yvonne Romain (who were mother and grown-up son in WEREWOLF) play

Films aside, the package is a lean one. Menus are easily negotiated, but there are no extras-no trailers, no commentaries, no nothing. Still, the HAM-MER HORROR SERIES comes highly recommended, and it's hoped that Columbia and MGM will soon offer their Hammer holdings as well.

-Farnham Scott

THE CABINET OF CALIGARI 20th Century Fox-\$14.98

the young lovers.

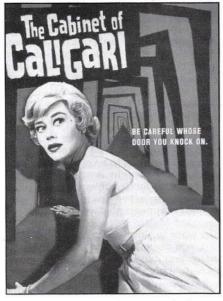
Although the title THE CABINET OF CALIGARI (1962) implies a remake of Robert Wiene's THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI (1919), the film bears only the slightest resemblance to the silent horror classic (other than its climactic use of visually disorienting sets, which are surely intended as an homage to Wiene). Robert Bloch's screenplay seems more like a continuation of the theme of sexual repression explored in his seminal novel Psycho (1959).

Jane Lindstrom's (Glynis Johns) car suffers a flat tire and breaks down out in the country. Somewhat dazed, she haltingly finds her way to a majestic mansion owned by Dr. Caligari (Dan O'Herlihy). He solicitously admits her to his house and introduces her to his other "guests" (played by such character actors as Estelle Winwood, Constance Ford, J. Pat O'Malley, and Dick Davalos).

Jane and Caligari establish a push/pull relationship from which she makes several unsuccessful attempts to flee. As in a nightmare, she always falls short of actually escaping. Jane is also periodically confronted with therapeutic shock tableaux, which are effectively displayed via montages of still frames.

The film's cumulative effect is more puzzling than thrilling. The florid and stilted dialogues between Jane and Caligari suggest a symbolic chess match rather than a genuine drama about flesh and blood protagonists. Although the script eschews traditional character development, Bloch manages to employ one of his favorite literary devices—the notion of dual identity. Mystery devotees and fans of the author will have no trouble predicting that particular "revelation."

Considering the modest cast and budget, the mansion itself is arguably the star of the production. The structure, surrounded by an electrified gate, boasts rooms decorated with *objets d'art* and incongruous bric-a-brac. The entire third floor houses Caligari's study,



an imposing suite that can only be accessed through a revolving glass door. The considerate doctor also maintains a window panel positioned directly above the second floor bathtub.

Fox's DVD offers both CinemaScope (2:35-1) and full frame transfers. The rarely-shown film, which never joined the company of genre pictures becoming kiddie-matinee fodder in the early sixties (perhaps due to Jane's attempted cocktail dress seduction of Caligari), makes its home video debut on the disc. The widescreen option is preferable, revealing the assorted props that adorn the massive-appearing sets.

The handsome black-and-white cinematography holds its own compared to the more highly-regarded THE INNO-CENTS (1961) and THE HAUNTING (1963). One particularly arresting visual composition depicts Caligari seated

at his desk on the extreme right side of the frame while Jane becomes trapped in the glass revolving door positioned at the far left edge. The source print utilized for the transfer is virtually flawless, evidencing only one stray mark. The only supplement is a slightly matted trailer that emphasizes the more horrific images. The DVD provides an excellent rendering of this largely forgotten entry in the early sixties series of "horror of personality" films.

-John F. Black

BEWITCHED: THE COMPLETE FIRST SEASON Columbia TriStar —\$39.95

The DVD release of the first season of baby-boomer favorite BEWITCHED, especially in such a reasonably-priced and well-produced package (one may only balk at the lack of airdate listings, by now a TV-on-DVD standard), is cause for rejoicing by fans of classic TV.

These episodes established the structural foundation of a series that would weather eight seasons and 254 episodes on ABC, lasting nearly as long as the war in Vietnam. Significantly, Samantha (Elizabeth Montgomery), chooses not to "come out" to Darrin Stephens (Dick York) as a "house-haunting, broomriding, cauldron-stirring witch" during their whirlwind courtship or at any point prior to their wedding. She waits until their honeymoon, just before their marriage is to be consummatedas if to suggest that, while headstrong enough to have allowed herself to fall in love with and marry a mortal, the prospect of actually commencing an unorthodox sexual union with him is formidable enough to give even the most willful witch a moment's pause.

As husband and wife subsequently contemplate their future, negotiating the proper place for Samantha's magical abilities in the cozy suburban fantasyland they'll occupy with such other first families of television as the Cleavers and the Petries, Samantha is the first to suggest abandoning her powers altogether. Nevertheless, Darrin quickly assumes an authoritarian role. His often strident, dictatorial stance might have put a stopper on merriment were it not for York's charm (a theory proven beyond doubt in season six, when the part was assumed by the saturnine Dick Sargent, ushering in the series' decline).

As a feminist role model, Samantha Stephens falls somewhere between Lucy Ricardo (who, though dominated by patriarchal dogma, is so addled by her screwball nature that she cannot suppress her identity) and Maude Findlay (who, having assumed the traditional man's role, must continually remind herself to consider her husband's needs). Samantha has voluntarily set aside a part of her former life for love, but reserves the right to access it on occasion as she deems fit.

While stumbling at times into the repetition and predictability of sitcoms



(though less often than might be expected at a time when a season ran for 36 episodes), BEWITCHED holds up as one of the finest and most entertaining series of its day. Montgomery's delicious performance, as well as those of Agnes Moorehead (as Sam's mother, Endora), Alice Pearce (as nosy neighbor Gladys Kravitz), and Marion Lorne (as bumbling Aunt Clara), keep things twitchy. Some individual segments in this first season are textbook examples of TV rendered with brains and heart (as well as unabashedly liberal politics): most notably "A Vision of Sugar Plums" (embittered orphan Billy Mumy accompanies Samantha to the North Pole to meet Santa Claus) and "A is for Aardvark" (directed by Ida Lupino, in which Samantha bursts into real tears—quite unusual for the era before Norman Lear began introducing serious themes into comic programs—as she explains to Darrin that the simple wristwatch he has given her means more to her than anything she could whip up on her own, beautifully articulating the rewards of compromise for the sake of sharing one's life with another).

BEWITCHED is available in both the original black-and-white and colorized edition. Stick with the original. It's magic enough.

—Jon Anthony Carr

CRY-BABY Universal—\$19.99

Announced by Universal last year, then quietly pulled from the schedule, CRY-BABY (1990) has now arrived on DVD.



Writer/director John Waters' first—and only—Hollywood film, CRY-BABY was well worth the wait, since Universal gave Waters the okay to prepare a new cut of his juvenile delinquent musical.

Baltimore, 1954, and it's a clash of cultures between the Squares (nerds) and the Drapes (cool punks). Wade "Cry-Baby" Walker (Johnny Depp), orphaned by the state when both parents were sent to the electric chair, is the town's Alpha Drape. He takes a shine to Alison Vernon-Williams (Amy Locane), also orphaned, and asks her to Turkey Point, the Drape hangout. She accepts and finds herself fitting into Drape culture quite easily. This comes as a shock to Alison's grandmother (Polly Bergen) and boyfriend, Baldwin (Stephen Mailer), both upset at this disregard for social rules. Baldwin takes matters into his own hands and launches a Square attack on Turkey Point. Naturally, the police blame the Drapes-Cry-Baby is sent to juvie and his sister, Pepper (Ricki Lake), has her kids (Jonathan Benya and Jessica Raskin) taken from her. With families ripped apart, Alison must choose—is she a Drape or a Square?

Waters' first film after the passing of Divine, his greatest star, CRY-BABY is very much a transitional film and not entirely successful. However, this fusion of juvenile delinquent film and Technicolor musical only misses the mark slightly and straddles the line between old and new guard Waters quite respectably. A couple of the early musical numbers are a bit lackadaisical, but two show-stoppers—"Doing Time For Being Young" and "Please Mr. Jailer"—are ample compensation and lift the

energy level greatly.

Beyond the songs, all of the classic Waters elements are present. Outrageous situations, snappy, quotable dialogue, tacky and gaudy sets and costumes, and an energetic supporting cast from mainstream (Troy Donahue, David Nelson) to underground (Susan Tyrell, Iggy Pop, Mink Stole)—it's all here. Kudos must also go to Johnny Depp, whose terrific performance put an end to his status as teen idol and led to a more off-

beat and challenging career.

The additional scenes in this Director's Cut are well chosen and flesh out some characterizations, add some great laughs, and make for a better experience than the theatrical cut. Apart from a few scratches and dirt on the negative and a few soft shots, this widescreen enhanced transfer is positively lustrous. Colors are rich and bold, as befitting a paean to Technicolor musicals, with a finely detailed and sharp image. The stereo soundtrack sounds just fine, punchy with good range. There are only a few extras, but they're quality, including the obligatory Waters commentary, which is up to his usual standards-informative, raunchy, and hilarious. (He even wonders, after telling a bawdy story, if the track has to be PG-13.) The second extra is a making-of featurette, including new interviews with many cast and crew members. Last comes a spattering of deleted scenes, which, if included in the cut, would have thrown

the pacing off, but more than deserve to be seen.

Subversive enough for all but the most hardcore Waters fans and yet gentle enough for more conservative viewers, the Director's Cut of CRY-BABY is a great treat for the Drape in all of us.

-Ron Morgan

THE HIGH AND THE MIGHTY Paramount—\$19.99 ISLAND IN THE SKY Paramount—\$14.99

After years of being unavailable in any medium (except for some pan-and-scan bootleg videos of dubious quality), THE HIGH AND THE MIGHTY (1954) has finally come to home video, thanks to Batjac (the John Wayne production company that owned the rights) and Paramount Home Video. It is cause for celebration

THE HIGH AND THE MIGHTY is generally thought of as the granddaddy of airplane disaster films. It was released at a time when air travel was not the popular form of travel that it is today. The film is best viewed in that context. I've read several Internet posts where young people thought this was a completely laughable and stupid movie. (It's difficult for most young people to view anything in context or away from their own limited life view.) Having seen it back in 1954 (some 20 times-l made anyone I knew take me over and over), I can assure you it was not laughable or stupid. It was a thrilling and suspenseful film, with colorful performances from its all-star (sort of) cast, and a great, rousing score by Dimitri Tiomkin.



The plot concerns a bunch of disparate people on a plane—engines fail, tempers broil, jealousy erupts, and John Wayne saves the day. It's an interesting role for Wayne (Spencer Tracy was originally cast, but withdrew), and he's terrific as Dan Roman, the pilot haunted by guilt. Robert Stack is properly rigid as the other pilot, and there are fun, over-the-top turns by Phil Harris, Claire Trevor, Robert Newton and—most especially—Sidney Blackmer, as a gun-toting jealous husband. And yes, Virginia, in 1954 it was entirely possible to walk onto a plane with a concealed weapon.

Newcomers Doe Avedon, John Smith, and Karen Sharpe all do very well, especially Avedon as the stewardess trying to keep it together. Also along for the ride are Laraine Day, Paul Kelly, the marvelous Pedro Gonzales-Gonzales, William Hopper, William Campbell, Wally Brown, Joy Kim, Ann Doran, Paul Fix, and a host of others, in the air and on the ground. The two best performances (aside from the Duke) belong to John Qualen, who is wonderful as the seatmate to Blackmer's jealous husband, and Jan Sterling, who almost walks away with the film, in a heartbreaking, brave, and somewhat frightening performance (at least to this then young six-year-old). And then there is Muzzy Marcellino, who is as much a part of the film as anyone. Marcellino provides the whistling for John Wayne, and his frequent whistling of the title-tune melody is unforgettable.

Director William Wellman keeps the

Director William Wellman keeps the 140-plus minutes of the movie moving right along, while juggling all the stories so that they never lose focus.

So, how does THE HIGH AND THE MIGHTY fare on DVD after all these years? After all the rumors of the camera negative being faded and in horrible disrepair, the rumors turned out to be completely false. The DVD image is fantastic—sharp and colorful, and presented in its very wide CinemaScope ratio (enhanced for widescreen TVs). The new 5.1 mix is also fantastic, with Tiomkin's score bursting forth in all its stereophonic glory. All in all, the film is still fabulously entertaining.

THE HIGH AND THE MIGHTY DVD is a two-disc set loaded with extras, although I found most of them wanting. There are fun facts to be gleaned, and the feature on Tiomkin is appreciated, but the presentation (endless talking heads) is wearying after a while. And even though it appears that you can skip the Leonard Maltin intro (and believe me, you want to skip the Leonard Maltin intro), you cannot skip the Leonard Maltin intro. You can fast forward through it, though, which is what I recommend.

Paramount and Batjac have also released ISLAND IN THÉ SKY (1953), another film that has been out of circulation for years. It's a rather odd film, with its stark, realistic footage of a downed plane and its passengers trying to survive in the freezing cold, and the somewhat comic scenes of barracks life, juxtaposed with tense scenes of a rescue operation. It never quite comes together as a whole, but Wayne, in another atypical role as the pilot, again proves himself a fine actor. The supporting cast are all pros. Like THE HIGH AND THE MIGHTY, IS-LAND IN THE SKY was directed by Wayne favorite, William A. Wellman. The score is credited solely to Emil Newman, but a good deal of it was, in fact, written by Hugo Friedhofer.

The black-and-white film is presented full-frame on DVD. The transfer is excellent, very sharp, with good contrast. Whether it should be full-frame or not is open to question, since the film was shown in widescreen in its LA premiere at the Paramount Theater (widescreen meaning 1:85). The film actually was released several weeks before 1953's THE ROBE (the first CinemaScope film), and its release was trumpeted with "see it on the big wide screen, in stereophonic sound." The stereophonic sound is also nowhere to be found—it's mono on the DVD, albeit very good mono.

-Bruce Kimmel

IN SEARCH OF THE CASTAWAYS SUMMER MAGIC THAT DARN CAT! Walt Disney—\$19.99 each

Hayley Mills fans can find three reasons to rejoice with these three DVD releases completing the performer's Disney oeuvre: IN SEARCH OF THE CASTAWAYS (1962), SUMMER MAGIC (1963), and THAT DARN CAT! (1965).

While the new titles feature none of the bonus features of the previously issued DVD Special Editions of POLLY-ANNA (1960) or THE PARENT TRAP (1961), SUMMER MAGIC does get a fitting widescreen release—though the other two new releases unfortunately mirror THE MOON-SPINNERS (1964) with full-screen versions. Still, DVD releases of Hayley Mills films are always welcome even in no-frills editions; one of Disney's brightest stars shines in any incarnation, as the young performer's skills still hold up against the best of any child actor working today.

Maurice Chevalier and some thenadvanced special effects almost manage to eclipse Mills in CASTAWAYS, but her followup to THE PARENT TRAP still gives her some nice moments, especially when she's singing a Sherman brothers tune with Chevalier. Disney's previous Jules Verne adaptation, the nearly perfect 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA (1954), was bound to overshadow this one; without antihero of Captain Nemo's caliber, there's less drama. Earthquakes, fire, flood, and a giant condor seem less threatening when accompanied by an occasional tune, but-though the adventure lacks drama-a rousing sense of fun makes up for the episodic nature of the plot.

Disney's next movie for Mills was SUMMER MAGIC. While it may not have matched the box-office success of her previous work, this little-film-that-could has picked up a devoted following through the years, thanks in no small part to its winning score and infectious songs by the talented Sherman brothers. Something of a musical dress rehearsal for the sensational MARY POPPINS the following year, SUMMER MAGIC gave the Shermans the opportunity to pen some catchy songs, including "The Ugly Bug Ball," "Flitterin'," the title tune, and four other numbers, all of which nicely stand the test of time. The music



and a stellar cast more than make up for a simple but appropriately nostalgic script (based on Kate Douglas Wiggin's 1911 novel Mother Carey's Chickens) depicting early 20th-century American rural life. Burl Ives, Dorothy McGuire, Deborah Walley, Una Merkel, Eddie Hodges, Michael J. Pollard, Peter Brown, and Jimmy Mathers (younger brother to Jerry), join Mills for a nearly "Pink of Perfection" combination.

A great cast also makes THAT DARN CAT! just as much fun, if for different reasons. Mills' sixth and last film of her youth for Disney, the movie proved a hit, her best-performing picture since PARENT TRAP. Having blossomed into a curvy young woman, Mills plays junior detective alongside youthful Dean Jones in his first of many Disney films. Dorothy Provine, Roddy McDowall, Neville Brand, Elsa Lanchester, William Demarest, Frank Gorshin, and Ed Wynn-not to mention the Siamese cat in the middle of all the mystery and intrigueeach bring their considerable talents to the merry mayhem. As kidnappers and potential killers, Brand and Gorshin portray the most realistically chilling Disney villains from this era, bringing a dramatic balance to the studio's patented animal slapstick. It's a winning formula, and one of the studio's better comedies

Was just the presence of Hayley Mills enough to make a Disney film even better or did the studio simply select better vehicles for its child star? Either point can be debated, but there's no denying that the young English actor's presence usually spelt success with audiences, a spell still evident more than 40 years later.

from the period.

—Jim Holifield

KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER Universal—\$39.98

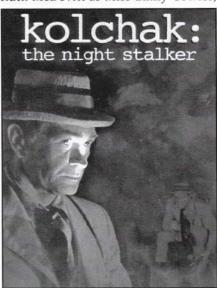
If it accomplishes nothing else—and so far it's accomplished very little—the new TV retread of the classic seventies series KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER (retitled simply THE NIGHT STALKER) has prodded Universal in the corporate ass and persuaded the company to finally release the original show on DVD.

KOLCHAK was inspired by two hit telefilms (1972's THE NIGHT STALKER and 1973's THE NIGHT STRANGLER) and Jeff Rice's unpublished 1970 novel *The Kolchak Papers* (which saw print after the success of the first movie). The se-

ries only lasted one season (1974-75), but its 20 episodes became a cult phenomenon when they turned up on THE CBS LATE MOVIE in the late seventies and eighties. The show inspired in turn THE X-FILES (1993-2002), a comicbook series, followup books, and the aforementioned new program.

Production values on the original series were rarely top-flight. The "monster of the week" was sometimes cheesy, and the stories occasionally rushed. No matter. What KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER had—what the new show lacks entirely—was a charismatic star in the lead role of seedy reporter Carl Kolchak. Darren McGavin brought charm to spare to the character in the seventies. As the new Kolchak, Stuart Townsend makes David Duchovny's Fox Mulder look like the lampshade-wearing life of the party.

Mesmerizing as he was, McGavin was not the whole show. Carried over from NIGHT STALKER and STRANG-LER was Simon Oakland as Carl's lovably gruff nemesis, editor Tony Vincenzo. Lending fine comic support were Jack Grinnage as uptight Ron Updyke, Ruth McDevitt as Miss Emily Cowles,



Carol Ann Susi as Monique Marmelstein, and John Fiedler as Gordon "Gordy the Ghoul" Spangler. Guest stars included Kathleen Nolan, Keenan Wynn, William Daniels, J. Pat O'Malley, James Gregory, Dick Van Patten, Nita Talbot, Marvin Kaplan, Alice Ghostley, Richard Kiel, Phil Silvers, Ned Glass, Julie Adams, Nina Foch, Jim Backus, Hans Conreid—virtually a Who's Who (and sometimes a Who's What) of seventies TV.

That KOLCHAK doesn't always live up to the two telefilms is no crime—they're a tough act to follow. Nevertheless, the series' batting average was high, with such episodes as "The Zombie," "They Have Been, They Are, They Will Be," "The Vampire," "The Spanish Moss Murders," and "Horror in the Heights" (written by Hammer Films'

Jimmy Sangster sharp enough to do any supernatural TV series proud.

The box set presents all 20 episodes on three discs, with no extras in sight. Picture and sound quality are good, and the episodes are uncut. It's good to have the real Kolchak back at long last!

—Drew Sullivan

BATMAN BEGINS Warner Bros.—\$30.97

Is BATMAN BEGINS (2005) quite the fabulous rethinking of the Batman mythos as has been touted? No, probably not. Yes, it's about as far from the two Joel Schumacher films (1995's BATMAN FOREVER and 1997's BATMAN AND ROBIN) as it's possible to get. How-



ever, it's not that far afield from the two Tim Burton movies (1989's BATMAN and 1992's BATMAN RETURNS) that marked the first serious attempts to bring the comic book to the screen.

BĂTMAN RETURNS was attacked for being too violent, too dark, too scary, too grotesque and definitely not a film for young children — all of which could just as easily be applied to Christopher Nolan's film.

The difference this time is that Nolan's BATMAN BEGINS—unlike BATMAN RETURNS—is exactly the film that Warner Bros. wanted. The most significant difference between Burton's films and Nolan's lies in the fact that the new film is less personal. BATMAN RETURNS was perhaps more successful as part of the filmmaker's oeuvre than as a Batman picture.

BATMAN BEGINS takes the story back to its origins. That isn't exactly new, since BATMAN did pretty much the same thing. Here, the background is the crux of the story, and about half the movie is spent on the transformation of Bruce Wayne (Christian Bale) into his alter ego. Nolan's screenplay (coauthored with David S. Goyer) shrewdly structures the story in overlapping pieces covering various time frames in a cross-reference fashion, keeping the developments from becoming tedious.

The scenes involving Bruce's training under Henri Ducard (Liam Neeson) at the compound of Ra's Al Ghul (Ken Watanabe), where Ducard hopes to recruit Bruce into the League of Shadows-sometimes seems like a contest to see how many times the word "fear" can be worked into the dialogue. However, once Bruce is Batman, Nolan's film is frequently brilliant-not in the least because Batman's actions are kept at a minimum. His attacks on criminals are swift, brutish, out-ofnowhere. and genuinely creepy. He's a hero who is nearly as frightening as the people he's fighting, giving the film an undercurrent of being an indictment of vigilante justice. As such, it may be the deepest Bat flick ever, which makes it unfortunate that it stops to include an out-of-place chase scene in the spectacularly ill-conceived new Batmobile, and has a serious problem as concerns its villains. With the exception of Cillian Murphy's marvelously theatrical and disturbing Dr. Jonathan Crane (aka The Scarecrow), the bad guys are rather lackluster. The performances are solid-even if we've seen Liam Neeson do this sort of thing too often-but they generally lack verve, and it hurts the film.

The good guys, however, are very well done (unusual in this kind of film), with Bale an even better Bruce Wayne than a Batman. Michael Caine gives his best performance in ages as Alfred Pennyworth, and Gary Oldman approaches sheer brilliance as Detective Iames Gordon.

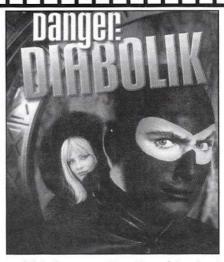
Extra for the two-disc Deluxe Edition include an interactive comic book, an MTV spoof (TANKMAN BEGINS), a gaggle of "making of" documentaries, a photo gallery—everything you need to devote the rest of your life to BATMAN BEGINS.

-Ken Hanke

DANGER: DIABOLIK! Paramount—\$14.95

Along with producing some of the worst movies of all time (like the 1976 remake of KING KONG), Dino de Laurentiis is also responsible for some terrific films, such as BARBARELLA and DANGER: DIABOLIK (both 1968). In the latter, John Philip Law plays Diabolik, an amoral anarchist antihero whose only redeeming features are his love for his sidekick, Eva Kant (Marisa Mell), and being seriously sexy. Adolpho Celi (whom viewers will remember as James Bond's nemesis in 1965's THUNDER-BALL), plays mafioso Ralph Valmont, who attempts to track down Diabolik when the law starts breathing down his neck. Terry-Thomas amusingly plays the Italian minister of finance, reduced to appealing to taxpayers' honesty once Diabolik destroys the national tax infrastructure.

Diabolik's got a really bad attitude. When he steals millions of dollars, he



and his lover scatter it on his giant spinning bed and have wild sex on it. (How¹d you like to clean up that mess?) He sneers at the both the government and organized crime, and he always has a backup plan. In short, he's the essence of sixties counterculture coolness.

And so is the movie. DIABOLIK has great theme music (provided by Ennio Morricone), fast cars, gadgets for just about every conceivable purpose, a lair that would make Batman envious, and some leather-and-latex costumes that wouldn't be out of place at a fetish convention. There are chase sequences that have dizzying intensity. Director Mario Bava, well aware of Diabolik's comic-book (or fumetti, as they're called in Italian) origins, photographs the movie in pop art colors and breaks up his frames with objects to give the impression of comic panels. Diabolik himself, looking reptilian in his kinky outfits, never seems to stand still, keeping up with the movie's often frenzied pace, darting his eyes constantly, exploding with pent-up energy.

DANGER: DIABOLIK slid into near-total obscurity after its release. Since then, the movie has understandably become an underground classic. For its DVD release, Law and film historian Tim Lucas provide a lively and enter-taining commentary track. A short documentary, FROM FUMETTI TO FILM, rounds out the impressive package. The film itself looks and sounds great in its letterboxed transfer. There are flecks and flaws in some of the more elaborate effects shots, but really, the film is so entertaining that you'd have to be awfully anal to gripe about them.

—Robin Anderson

IN OLD CHICAGO ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND THE RAZOR'S EDGE NIGHTMARE ALLEY 20th Century Fox—\$14.98 each

Fox Home has released a trio of Tyrone Power films on DVD in affordable editions offering a terrific capsule of the best roles in the career of one of Hollywood's handsomest leading men.

IN OLD CHICAGO (1937) is a highly fictionalized account of the O'Leary family, leading up to and including the infamous fire of 1871. Power shines as Dion O'Leary, the rogue brother of Jack (Don Ameche), the honest mayor. The brothers find themselves in a bitter dispute until the great calamity brings them together. Criticized as an overlong melodrama, the film actually works well despite several musical numbers that add considerably to the length. Alice Fave turns in a fine performance as Dion's girlfriend, Belle Fawcett, while Alice Brady won an Oscar for her work as Molly O'Leary, the family matriarch. Brian Donlevy, Andy Devine, and Phyllis Brooks also contribute in supporting roles-and be on the lookout for Rondo Hatton as a bodyguard named Rondo!

The print shows graininess and some blemishes, but that doesn't deter from one's enjoyment or appreciation of the incredible scenes of the fire and its aftermath. Extras include the extended Road Show version of the film (with 15 minutes of additional footage), MOVIETONE NEWS footage, and an A&E BIOG-

RAPHY of Don Ameche.

With no musical talent of his own, Power, up against the formidable talents of Irving Berlin, Alice Faye, and Ethel Merman in ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND (1937), survives on good looks and charisma alone. That's saying a lot when you take into account that Berlin provided Power's leading ladies with such showstoppers as "Blue Skies," "Heat Wave," and the title tune. Extras



include an audio commentary by filmscore restorationist Ray Fiola, several deleted scenes, and another A&E BIOG-RAPHY—this one covering the life and career of Alice Faye.

THE RAZOR'S EDGE (1946) provided Power with a chance to break from his typical roles and dig into the metaphysical quest for enlightenment detailed in W. Somerset Maugham's best-selling novel of 1944. However, the film is notorious for being a love or hate affair with fans. Maugham himself

found it difficult to dramatize the spiritual aspirations of Larry Darrell (played by Power in the film), and Hollywood doesn't do any better. With a cipher at its center, interest turns to the supporting characters and the actors playing them: Gene Tierney (as Isabel, Larry's love interest), Clifton Webb (as Elliott Templeton), John Payne (as Gray Maturin), Anne Baxter (in an Oscar-winning turn as Sophie Nelson), Herbert Marshall (as W. Somerset Maugham), Elsa Lanchester (as Miss Keith) and Cecil Humphreys (as the Holy Man). It's no easy task to express internal growth, but Power manages quite well despite screenwriter Lamar Trotti giving the strongest dialogue to Tierney and Webb, who sparkle with sharp exchanges. Pay special note to the scene in which Larry uses a coin and mental suggestion to cure Gray's migraine. It's a telling precursor to Power's performance in his next film, **NIGHTMARE ALLEY (1947)**

Weaknesses aside, THÉ RAZOR'S EDGE is an engaging film, with a rich score. The DVD's audio commentary by Anthony Slide and Robert Birchard is well worth a listen, most notably when they point out songs used in the film that weren't true to the period in

which the story takes place.

The success of THE RAZOR'S EDGE was followed by the most intriguing film of Power's career, NIGHTMARE AL-LEY. Based on William Lindsay Gresham's 1946 novel, this disturbing noir tale is a dark treat. Power is outstanding as Stanton Carlisle, a carnival barker who manipulates his way to success as a mind-reading charlatan and eventually spirals down to the lowest depths. Colleen Gray glows as Molly, his young wife. Joan Blondell excels as Zeena, the trickster from whom Stanton originally steals his act. Helen Walker provides a powerful performance as Lilith Ritter, the conniving psychiatrist who accelerates Stanton to his greatest heights and precipitates his terrible downfall.

The film is a mesmerizing immersion in carny life. The only misstep is the hopeful ending the studio forced director Edmund Goulding to tack on instead of the novel's grim conclusion. That aside, one comes away wondering what Power could have accomplished had he been given still more challenging roles

with cutting-edge directors.

Extras on the disc include MOVIE-TONE NEWS footage and an illuminating audio commentary by Alain Silver and James Ursini. If you're a fan of film noir—and what Scarlet Streeter isn't—this nightmare is right up your alley.

—Michael D. Walker

THE CRIMSON PIRATE Warner Bros.—\$19.98

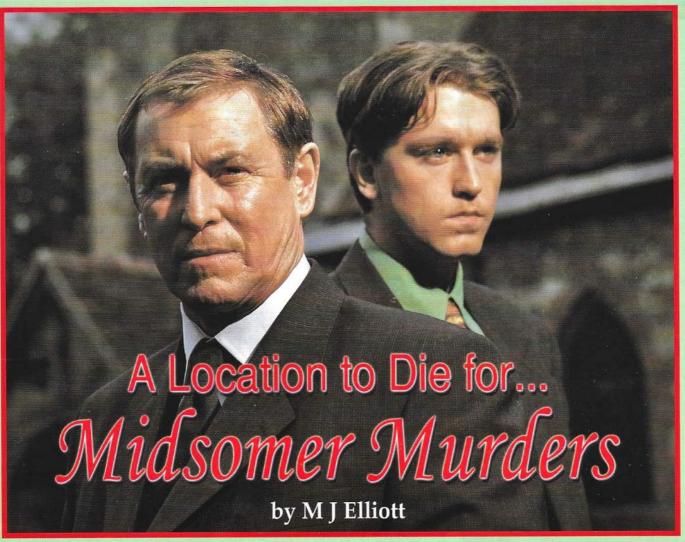
The movie swashbuckler is always best when it takes itself least seriously; the genre's most famous stars were Douglas Fairbanks and Errol Flynn and the insouciant glint in their eyes shone as brightly as the flash of their swords. But the most outrageous sword and satire film of all has got to be THE CRIM-SON PIRATE (1952); it isn't the BLAZ-ING SADDLES of adventure films—it plays straight much of the time—but the humor is broader and more pervasive than usual.

Captain Vallo (Burt Lancaster, at the height of his physical beauty and teeth newly capped) and Ojo (Nick Cravat, Lancaster's old circus partner in a mute performance as appealing as anything



Harpo Marx ever gave) head up a band of pirates who align themselves with a group of freedom fighters in order to sell out their leader to the oppressive king—until, of course, Vallo encounters the lovely daughter (Eva Bartok) of the resistance leader (Frederick Leister) and has a change of heart. This prompts his crew (including Torin Thatcher as the head quisling) to mutiny.

All comes out right in the end, naturally, but the familiar plot is merely an excuse for an endless string of dazzling gymnastic displays, as highly choreographed as any musical production number, by Lancaster and Cravat. An early sequence has them climbing buildings, swinging from awnings, popping in and out of windows, from rooftop to rooftop, thumbing their noses at the constabulary in an effort to attract the attention of the rebels (who are naturally suspicious of these two loons). Their mostly undoubled performances hint at what their circus routines must have been like-part daredevil, part clown. The double-finale rebellion finds the protagonists in drag precipitating the rebellion on land and leading to a full-scale shipboard brawl in which Vallo deals with the villain-



here are two Holy Grails for the Phere are two flory of an British television industry – find an acceptable replacement for INSPEC-TOR MORSE and for the Joan Hickson MISS MARPLE series. Many are called—CAMPION and MRS. BRADLEY for the Marple job, INSPECTOR LYN-LEY and numerous other unremarkable cops with a literary background for the position of Morse-in-waitingand some are chosen. POIROT is very much its own animal, largely because of its sense of style and David Suchet's definitive performance as the Belgian detective. A TOUCH OF FROST, based on the novels of R. D. Wingfield, has at this stage outdistanced Morse, but its appeal is largely as a vehicle for star David Jason rather than as a detective drama

Only one show—MIDSOMER MUR-DERS—has achieved the seemingly impossible, and become both the new MISS MARPLE (being far superior to the actual new MISS MARPLE starring Geraldine McEwan) and the new MORSE. The show, developed by Anthony Horowitz from the novels by Caroline Graham, sees middleaged copper Tom Barnaby (John Nettles) and his young sergeant, Gavin Troy (Daniel Casey), investigating—

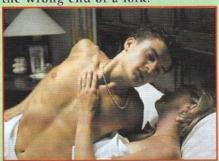
well, murders in the picture-postcard district of Midsomer. Like Cabot Cove in the States, Midsomer boasts an extraordinarily high homicide rate—but the suspension of disbelief is not stretched quite so far given that the British location is made up of several villages, instead of just one medium-sized town with a rapidly-decreasing population. Some considerable degree of disbelief suspension is still required, however—the series celebrated its 100th murder in the Season Four episode "Destroying Angel." The show has now reached its ninth

season, and people have stopped counting the corpses, of which there are usually three per 100-minute episode and sometimes as many as five.

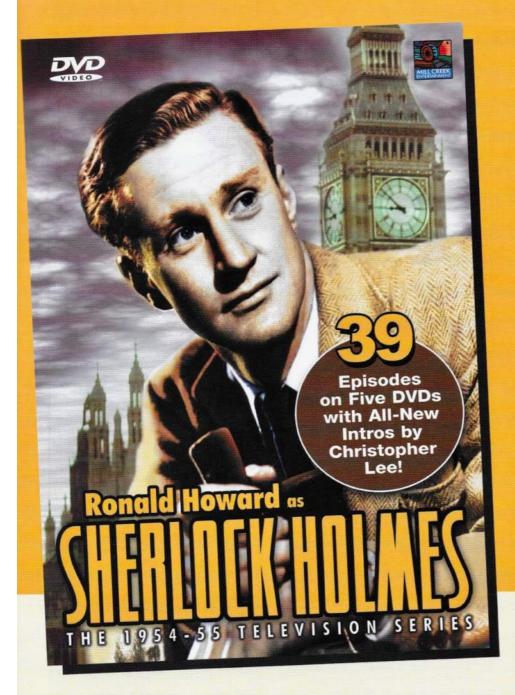
The show began in 1997 with an adaptation of Caroline Graham's 1987 novel The Killings at Badger's Drift (winner of the award for best drama of that year), but soon struck out on its own with original episodes featuring plotting as torturous—and as satisfying—as the best Agatha Christies. It cannot be a coincidence that the title

Continued on page 80

In the MIDSOMER MURDERS episode "Judgement Day" (2000), Orlando Bloom had the flashy role of a young stud who eventually finds himself on the wrong end of a fork.







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SCREEN AND SCREEN AGAIN

Continued from page 27

ous Baron Gruder (Leslie Bradley) and his chief henchman (Hammer's Christopher Lee in an early role). Both encounters are staged with equal parts heroics and hokum.

This goofy frolic was directed by Robert Siodmak, better known for his thrillers and films noir (including 1946's THE KILLERS, Lancaster's film debut). Actually, the confection might have more serious concerns than are immediately present. It was scripted by Roland Kibbee, who was then blacklisted. (Lancaster loved flouting HUAC, knowing he was too powerful in Hollywood for them to attack.) The backstory lends added freight to Vallo's observation, "All my life I've watched dishonesty fly the flag of decency."

-Harry H. Long

NERO WOLFE SEASON TWO A&E—\$99.95

Three years after the end of A&E's mystery series NERO WOLFE, the second and final season arrived on DVD, packaged in a handsome green box that will look most satisfactory sitting on your shelf next to the first season's set. The second season, based on the stories and novels by Rex Stout, brought us dramatizations of some of Stout's best work, including The Silent Speaker (1946), Too Many Clients (1960), and Mother Hunt (1963). The set also contains the series' two-hour pilot adaptation of The Golden Spiders (1953), which logically should have been included with the series' first season box. It's good to have it on DVD at last, whatever the circumstances.

The episodes look excellent—clear and colorful-in their broadcast full-frame presentation. The extras are skimpy to the point of frustration, however. There are only two cast biographies/filmographies, for Maury Chaykin (Nero Wolfe) and Timothy Hutton (Archie Goodwin). THE MAKING OF NERO WOLFE is a 22-minute fluff piece consisting primarily of clips from episodes interspersed with occasional comments from cast and crew. It offers virtually no new information and the constant intrusion of the clips becomes an irritant, since they take up time better suited to behind-the-scenes footage or interviews with the show's personnel. THE MAK-ING OF NERO WOLFE is the only source of information about the show; there are no episode commentaries or separate substantive interviews whatsoever.

The other major extra is a widescreen presentation of THE SILENT SPEAKER (which is also available in full-screen format). While it's a pleasure to have the episode in widescreen, the transfer is dismaying: it's non-anamorphic! As non-anamorphic transfers go, it's quite a good one, but that's no excuse for putting a non-anamorphic transfer onto a DVD when widescreen televisions are becoming more and more popular and

anamorphic provides a markedly better picture than non-anamorphic.

For that matter, why is THE SILENT SPEAKER the only episode presented in widescreen format? The second season was shot in high-definition video, presumably with a 1:78 aspect ratio. Yet the episodes were broadcast and then transferred to DVD in full-screen format. Why not take advantage of widescreen, not only for broadcast but for the best possible (i.e., anamorphic) DVD presentation?

Despite some quibbles over the lack of meaningful extras and screen format, the second season DVD set of NERO WOLFE is indispensable for mystery fans. The episodes themselves are a joy. It's always a pleasure to spend time in the company of Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, Fritz Brenner (Colin Fox), Inspector Cramer (Bill Smitro-



vich), and all the other indelible characters who turned up once a week, courtesy A&E, at the brownstone on West 35th Street, Manhattan.

-Paula Vitaris

THREE COINS IN THE FOUNTAIN 20th Century Fox—\$14.98

20th Century-Fox had this big Cinema-Scope screen to fill, so they took anyone with technical experience in the technique (introduced in 1953 with THE ROBE) to Rome and came back with this romantic travelogue—and a lot of process shots for Clifton Webb's scenes.

The DVD of Fox's 1954 megahit THREE COINS IN THE FOUNTAIN doesn't explain the film's popularity, but it gives a look at the morays and standards that were the norm back in the fifties. Fox specialized (and would continue to do so) in the "three girls looking for romance" film. It might be set on Broadway, in South America, in a book publishing office, or even in Madrid, but it was all the same.

The girls in this instance are good girl Maria Williams (Maggie McNamara),

spinster Miss Frances (Dorothy McGuire), and "bad" girl (she goes all the way) Anita Hutchins (Jean Peters). Maria and Anita are in Rome working for the USDA, a postwar government agency. Miss Frances works for an expatriate American writer, John Frederick Shadwell (Webb), whom everyone assumes is dead.

Great shots of Rome and other Italian locations give the film its interest. (In fact, the film starts with the ubiquitous theme song-Sinatra, of course-and a tour of the city.) Unfortunately, the actors keep getting in the way of the scenery. McNamara is most annoying playing a girl exactly like her character in THE MOON IS BLUE (1953). Maria tries to land an Italian prince, Dino di Cessi (Louis Jourdan), by playing hard to get. She gets her friend fired from her job and cares no more for the consequences of her stupidity than brushing a fly off her wine glass. Peters' Anita winds up with Italian stud Georgio (Rossano Brassi), who looks ready to burst into a song that never materializes. And Miss Frances sits down in a fountain and shows her carefree side to Shadwell, who approves with the patented Webb acerbity.

The DVD's widescreen format is a great improvement over the pan-and-scan prints that have been broadcast for years. The accompanying commentary by Jeanine Basinger is mostly banal. There is some footage of the Academy Awards ceremony wherein the film receives a couple of honors (song and cinematography), a trailer that doesn't show much, and a restoration comparison.

Cheaper than a trip to Rome, prettier than pictures you might take yourself, THREE COINS IN THE FOUNTAIN is a comfort film. Oh, and by the way—only two coins get thrown into the fountain!

-Jack Randall Earles

DAWN OF THE DEAD Anchor Bay—\$49.98

Someone recently observed that for every era, there's a Tom Wolfe novel that captures the mood and records it for printed posterity. Similarly, George Romero rips out the era's innards and splatters them across the screen. His horrifying and funny DAWN OF THE DEAD (1978), presented through a filter of unrelenting graphic violence, served as a major turning point for modern horror by redefining the genre and inspiring countless other film makers.

Anchor Bay's Ultimate Edition of DAWN OF THE DEAD, spread out over four discs, encapsulates the most complete editions of the film ever to be released here, greatly rewarding fans for waiting so long while the project came to fruition.

Disc one features the US Theatrical release with a commentary by Romero,



THE BELA LUGOSI COLLECTION Universal—\$26.98

Universal's BELA LUGOSI COLLEC-TION is an unexpected and delightful surprise for fans of the studio's classic horror canon. Included in the set are MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE (1932), THE BLACK CAT (1934), THE RAVEN (1935), THE IN-VISIBLE RAY (1936), and BLACK FRI-DAY (1940)-but this blessing, as it happens, is mixed. With the exception of RUE MORGUE, these films also star a gentleman by the name of Boris Karloff. In fact, while it's accurate to call MORGUE and RA-VEN "Bela Lugosi movies," the two stars are on an equal footing in CAT and it's unquestionably Karloff who dominates RAY and FRIDAY.

First on the bill is MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE, the project director Robert Florey inherited after being cashiered from FRANKEN-STEIN (1931). It concerns the weird Dr. Mirakle (Lugosi), a unibrowed carnival barker-cum-Darwinian scientist with a singularly unwholesome fate in store for heroine Camille (Sidney Fox); the devilish doctor plans to mate her with Erik the gorilla (Charles Gemora)! The script commingles Poe's 1841 source material with THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI (1919) to smooth effect, but Florey's direction often seems static, leaving it to Lugosi's florid performance and the Expressionistic set design to carry the day.

Next comes the collection's shining light-THE BLACK CAT, the film that remains director Edgar Ulmer's finest hour. Psychologically scarred World War One veteran Vitus Werdegast (Lugosi) makes the acquaintance of American newlyweds Peter and Joan Alison (David Manners and Jacqueline Wells) while en route to visit an old "friend," Hjalmar Poelzig (Karloff). The naive couple soon become pawns in a macabre game played out between Werdegast and Poelzig ("a game of death," as Poelzig puts it), the latter a Satanist with a sacrificial intent for Joan. Stunning Art Deco set design and superb lead performances compliment this classic.

After delighting in CAT's sleek perversity, THE RAVEN soars distinctly downward-but is still buckets of fun. This is a downright delirious excursion into over-the-top sadism, and definitely one of the pulpiest thrillers of the thirties. Dr. Vollin (Lugosi) is a daffy surgeon with an underground torture chamber and a terminal case of Poe-philia. Escaped convict Edmund Bateman (Karloff) comes to Vollin with a request: "I want you to change my face." That Vollin does-though not in the way Bateman expected; his face becomes frozen in a Jack Pierce-designed countenance of grotesquerie. Vollin intends to use Bateman in his plans to capture his beloved Jean (Irene Ware) and avenge himself on her father (Samuel S. Hinds).

TOP LEFT: Boris Karloff gives his impression of Joan Rivers' latest facelift for Bela Lugosi in THE RAVEN (1935). CENTER RIGHT: "But, Janos, sometimes an intergalactic projector is just an intergalactic projector!" Boris and Bela in THE INVISIBLE RAY (1936). Ray's in the film, too, but—well—you know. BOTTOM RIGHT: Karloff never has to send out for ice in THE MAN WITH NINE LIVES (1940).

THE INVISIBLE RAY is unique in that it presages the sci-fi thrillers of the fifties and, on an even more interesting level, borrows themes of a distinctly Lovecraftian nature. Dr. Janos Rukh (Karloff) is a scientist obsessed by the notion that deep within the African continent there exists a hitherto undiscovered element, one of extraterres-trial origin (a "colour out of space," as Lovecraft would put it). Rukh finds a meteorite containing the element, but he's contaminated in the process, able to kill with a mere touch. Dr. Benet (Lugosi) races to find a cure for his marauding-and glowing-colleague.

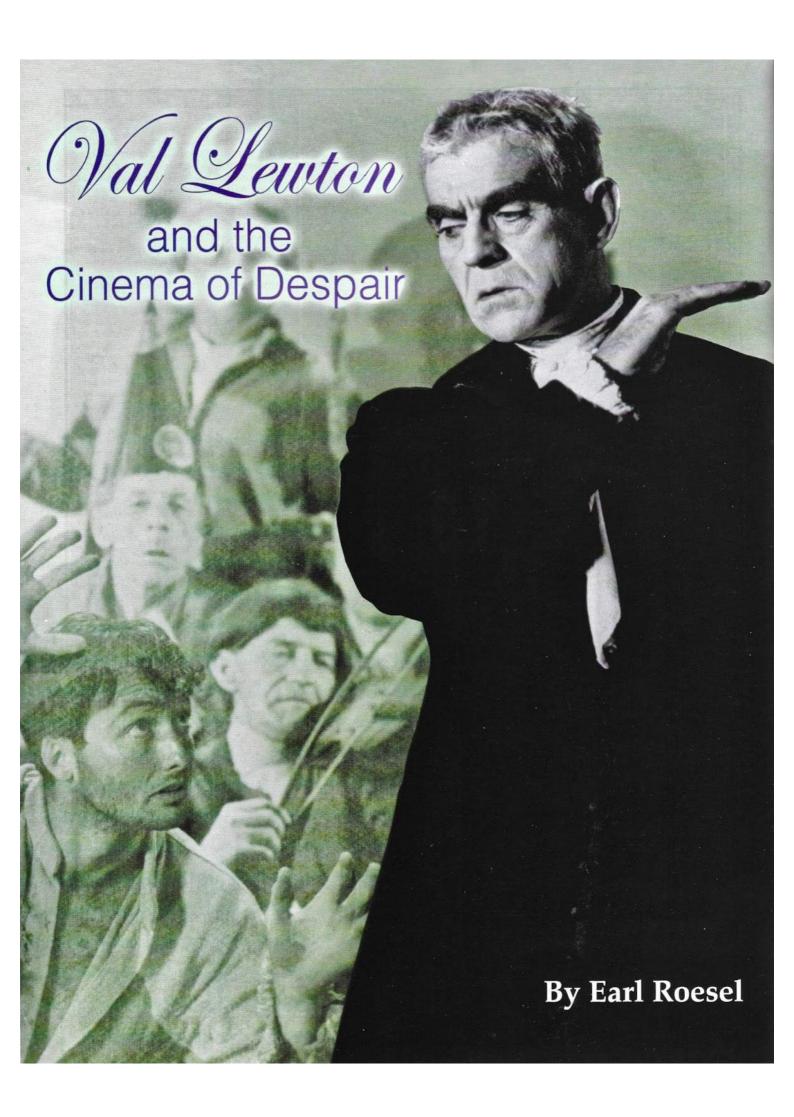
BLACK FRIDAY takes a leaf or two from Warner Bros. gangster thrillers of a generation earlier. Dr. Sovac (Karloff) attempts to save the life of the genteel, severely injured Professor Kingsley (Stanley Ridges) with a brain transplant. Unfortunately, the "donor" is one Red Cannon, notorious criminal kingpin. The procedure causes Kingsley to periodically transform into Cannon and avenge himself on a group of backstabbing hoods, among them Marnay (Lugosi, in a very small sup-

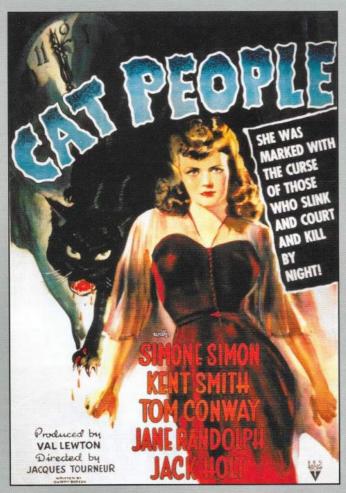
porting role).

Audiovisual quality for the set is mostly breathtaking, with RA-VEN looking the sharpest and RAY bringing up the rear (though it's still excellent). Extras are confined to trailers for everything except CAT and RAVEN. It's a splendid set, but surely it should have been called THE BORIS KARLOFF AND BELA LUGOSI COLLECTION.

-Earl Roesel







"I run to death, and death meets me as fast And all my pleasures are like yesterday . . ." —John Donne

o goes the evocative quote from John Donne that prefaces THE SEVENTH VICTIM (1943), one of nine horror films that Val Lewton produced for RKO between 1942 and 1946. At a time when Universal's monsters were being put through desperate and increasingly ridiculous machinations, the Russian-born Lewton (né Vladimir Leventon) sought to raise the genre's profile with his series of literate forays into the macabre. This was Subtle rather than Grand Guignol, relying on the unspeakable, unfathomable terrors of the mind, the shadowy stage where anything could be imagined, in lieu of the obvious (and more often than not, laughable) rubber-suited beastie. Above and beyond their uncommonly sophisticated mise en scene, however, what the Lewton productions collectively share is an all-pervasive sense of despair. It is a despair shared mutually between the films' characters and the world in which they live-if indeed such existences can be called "living." Their situations might be better described as living deaths, misty mid-regions where all hope dies and the nightmare never ends. Those who battle against this despair and lose are doomed.

"You're very wise, you know a great deal, yet when you speak of the soul you mean the mind—and it is not my mind that is troubled."

—Irena Dubrovna (Simone Simon), CAT PEOPLE

Lewton's premier excursion into cinemacabre, the Jacques Tourneur directed CAT PEOPLE (1942), establishes the

formula immediately. Irena Dubrovna (Simone Simon, in a sensuously evocative performance), a Serbian immigrant enslaved to the superstitions of the Old Country, falls somewhat unwillingly in love with Oliver Reed (Kent Smith), the all-American exemplar of sense and reason. Even after their wedding, Irena seems reluctant to involve herself intimately with her new beau, and her clear lack of affinity with animals—especially cats—further marks her as somewhat peculiar. That mark, as it emerges, is quite literal so far as Irena is concerned—she suffers the Curse of the Cat People, and is a descendant of a particularly diabolical sect of Satanists doomed to transform into feral black panthers and kill mercilessly whenever their passion is aroused.

In one of the film's most powerful images, Irena sits nude in a bathtub—a <u>claw-footed</u> bathtub—and cries in utter despair and horror at what she has become, or is becoming. Her misery extends to the formerly happy-go-lucky Oliver, who's at a loss to deal with Irena's strange, foreign ways. In a revealing admission to coworker Alice Moore (Jane Randolph), he confesses, "You know, it's a funny thing. I've never been unhappy before. Things have always gone swell for me. I had a grand time as a kid . . . lots of fun at school . . . at the office here with you, and the Commodore, and Doc. That's why I don't know what to do about all this. I've just never been unhappy."

Intriguingly, we're left in the dark as to whether or not Irena's curse is actual or merely a figment of her tormented imagination, as the suavely skeptical Dr. Louis Judd (Tom Conway) believes. In the film's most famous sequence, a masterful mélange of direction, acting, lighting, and sound, Alice is stalked by an unseen something while taking a nighttime dip in an indoor pool. Later, lecherous Dr. Judd is savaged to death when

he attempts to cure Irena by forcing himself upon her.

Wounded in the struggle with Judd, Irena goes to
the zoo and releases the panther that is one of the film's
many visual representations of her curse. (These include the aforementioned bathtub, the animated felines of Irena's nightmares, and the figure of King John of
Serbia spearing a feline representation of evil.) The

cat kills her and dashes off into the night; fallen, the remains of Dr. Judd's sword stick juts from Irena's back, fulfilling her artistic depiction of the panther shot through with a blade.

Is Irena mentally derangedthe victim of her own complexes and sexual repressions, of sublimated Sapphic desires (she's recognized by a feline woman, played memorably by Elizabeth Russell, as "moya ses-tra," or "sister") or is she the terrifying shape-shifter of ancient folklore? It matters little if she literally sprouts









LEFT: Perhaps the most chilling of many nocturnal strolls taken by Lewton characters is that made by Jessica Holland (Christine Gordon) and Betsy Connell (Frances Dee), who encounter the undead Carrefour (Darby Jones) in I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE (1943). RIGHT: Jacqueline Gibson (Jean Brooks) is hands down the most morbid heroine in horror history. No wonder—she's THE SEVENTH VICTIM (1943) of a coven of Satanists. Friends and relatives Dr. Louis Judd (Tom Conway), Gregory Ward (Hugh Beaumont), Mary Gibson (Kim Hunter), and Jason Hoag (Erford Gage) try to tell her that life is just a bowl of cherries—but she knows it's the pits.

fangs and fur or not; Irena is a doomed soul from the beginning. Lost in the unfathomable enigmas of the supernatural and the psychological, she surrenders to despair and seals her own fate.

The Holland man, he kept in a tower
A wife as pretty as a big white flower
She saw the brother and she stole his heart
And that's how the badness and the trouble start.

—Calypso Singer (Sir Lancelot),
I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE

Val Lewton's I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE (1943) functions as an inversion of its predecessor; instead of placing a figure of mystery and latent menace in a modern American milieu of rationality and skepticism, ZOMBIE transports a woman of sense and reason to a shadow-ridden land of magic and superstition.

Betsy Connell (Frances Dee) is a young, good-natured nurse called away from snow-swept Canada to the

steamy island of San Sebastian by Paul Holland (Tom Conway)—this in order to care for his comatose wife, Jessica (Christine Gordon). Paul is established as a morose type immediately, disabusing Betsy of her romantic illusions of the tropical idyll.

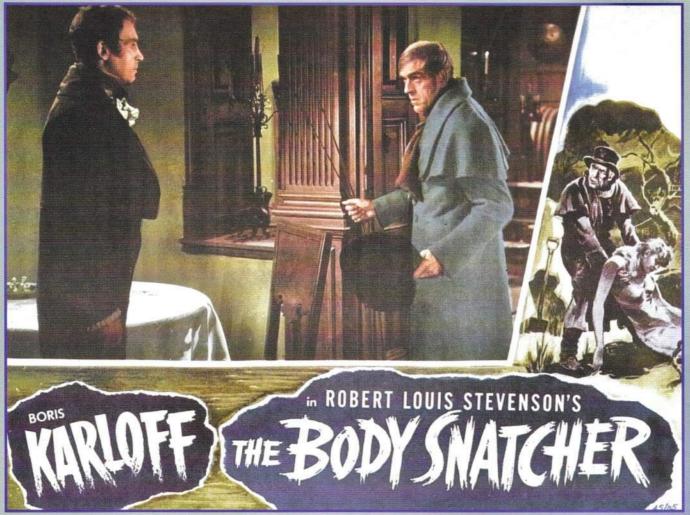
"It's not beautiful. Those flying fish—they're not leaping in joy, they're jumping in terror. Bigger fish want to eat them. That luminous water, it takes its gleam from millions of tiny dead bodies—the glitter of putrescence. There's no beauty here, only death and decay."

Far from sunny beaches and smiling, pith-helmeted native waiters, San Sebastian is a quietly gloomy place. The bitter legacy of colonialism and slavery holds powerful sway in the folk mythos. Arriving at Paul's plantation, Betsy meets his alcoholic brother, Wesley (James Ellison), Jessica's original suitor before Paul stole the girl away. Betsy finds herself strangely attracted to the cynical Paul, who seems more than happy to cuck-

LEFT: THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE (1944) proves despair comes in many forms. There's the despair of an old woman (Julia Dean) who's lost her daughter, and there's the despair of a daughter (Elizabeth Russell) whose own mother doesn't recognize her. RIGHT: The Gilded Boy (Glen Vernon) of BEDLAM (1946) finds grim death in a coat of gold paint. Master Sims (Boris Karloff) officiates at the ceremony. PAGE 35 TOP: Dr. Toddy McFarlane (Henry Daniell) confronts Cabman Gray (Karloff) in THE BODY SNATCHER (1945). PAGE 35 BOTTOM RIGHT: Oliver Reed (Kent Smith), daughter Amy (Ann Carter), wife Alice (Jane Randolph) and Amy's teacher, Miss Callahan (Eve March), confront THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE.







old his sick (zombified?) wife and expound on his thoroughly cynical world views. The wretched Wesley, meanwhile, remains a naive and jealous fool; wronged though he may have been, he refuses to let go of the past, preferring to despair of his situation. This is the recipe for doom in a Lewton film.

Paul and Wesley have two different fathers, both de-

Paul and Wesley have two different fathers, both deceased, but mother remains a powerful influence in their lives—more powerful than they can imagine. Mrs. Rand (Edith Barrett) is another figure of Lewtonesque despair, guilt-ridden over what her children—both literal (Paul and Wesley) and figurative (San Sebastian's natives)—have become. "They disobeyed me—things went from bad to worse. All my husband's dreams of good health, good sanitation, good morals for these sweet and gentle people seemed to die with him," bemoans Mrs. Rand. She bears a mother's peculiar burden with her own sons as well, one an alcoholic wreck and the other a hardened cynic—and she responsible by using voodoo to sentence Jessica to a living death. Mrs. Rand is I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE's most tragic soul.

Wesley, under the influence or perceived influence of voodoo magic, carries Jessica into the ocean, leaving Paul and Betsy to their newfound romance. Screenwriters Curt Siodmak and Ardel Wray (the former taking a break from arranging trysts for Frankenstein's Monster and the Wolf Man) borrow a few leaves from Jane Eyre (1847) and craft a highly offbeat Gothic Romance, while director Jacques Tourneur beguiles us with a terrifying nighttime trip though the jungle accompanied by animal talismans of magical significance and the balefully bug-eyed Darby Jones as the zombie Carrefour.

"You don't understand. Nobody understands. You don't know what it means to be tormented this way. I couldn't rest. I couldn't sleep. All I could see was Teresa Delgado's body—broken, mangled. I saw it day and night. It was waiting everywhere I turned. I didn't wanna kill, but I had to . . ."

—Dr. Galbraith (James Bell), THE LEOPARD MAN

For Lewton's third consecutive RKO horror film, THE LEOPARD MAN (1943), the themes of despair and attendant doom were sublimated to a degree—though here, too, the killer climactically reveals his torment in the speech quoted above. Adapted by Ar-







LEFT: General Pherides (Boris Karloff) battles the plague in a doomed effort to save his fellow visitors to the ISLE OF THE DEAD (1945), but it isn't the prospect of dying that frights Mrs. St. Aubyn (Katherine Emery)—it's the thought of not dying and being buried alive! RIGHT: Nurse Betsy Connell (Frances Dee) finds her sleep disturbed by the walking dead (Darby Jones as Carrefour) in I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE (1943). BELOW: This publicity photo of Tom Conway, Simone Simon, and Kent Smith makes CAT PEOPLE (1942) look more like a romantic comedy than a moody study in horror.

and Edward Dein from Cornel Woolrich's Black Alibi (1942, and the third in Woolrich's "black cycle"), THE LEOPARD MAN is a conventional mystery thriller in which a feral black leopard escapes from a nightclub act, a series of gruesome murders following in its wake. The denouement reveals the homicides to be the work of a human psychopath, negating the fascinating supernatural speculation that had worked so successfully in the previous films.

Still, the desolate Southwestern locale provides a sinister flavor all its own, and at least two scenes—one, in which a frightened young girl, Teresa Delgado (Margaret Landry), is mutilated outside a door that has been locked and barred by her own mother (Kate Drain Lawson), and another, in which another girl, Consuelo Contreras (Tula Parma), is trapped in a dark cemetery with

something-can raise the hack-

viewers.

les of even the heartiest of

THE LEOPARD MAN marked Jacques Tourneur's third and last directorial effort for Lewton. Dennis O'Keefe, Margo, and Jean Brooks starred. For Brooks, an undisputed Lewton classic was just around a very dark corner.

"No! No, I can't let you die! The only time I was ever happy was when I was with you . . ."

—Frances Fallon (Isabel Jewell),

THE SEVENTH VICTIM

THE SEVENTH VICTIM (1943) returned Lewton's Bmovie unit to more familiar terrain. This Mark Robson-directed yarn concerns schoolgirl Mary Gibson (Kim Hunter), who searches for her mysterious sister, Jacqueline (Jean Brooks), through a shadowy, noirish Greenwich Village.

From practically its first frame, THE SEV-ENTH VICTIM reeks of despair. The girls' boarding school, Highcliff, is an unhappy place behind whose walls the teachers have retreated from life. Miss Gilcrist (Eve March), assistant to the unfeeling headmistress, Mrs. Lowood (Ottola Nesmith), warns Mary against getting trapped in its academic clutches.

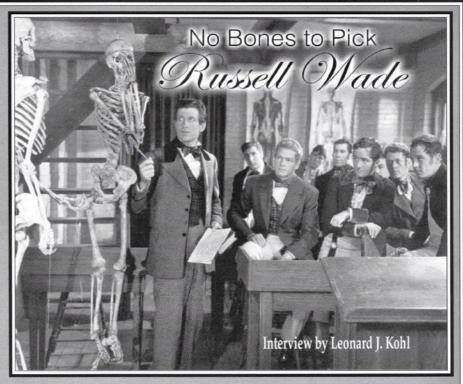
Mary, don't come back. No matter if you never find your sister—no matter what happens to you—don't come back. My parents died when I was a pupil. I left, as you are leaving, but I didn't have courage—one must have courage to really live in the world. I came back."

Waddle on June 21, 1917, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He was bitten by the acting bug early. In 1933, as a young man in his teens, appeared in a rough and tough Jack Holt adventure drama called THE WRECKER for Columbia Pictures. Later, he spent a few years at Universal, and went from there to RKO.

While researching my book Sinister Serials of Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi and Lon Chaney, Jr. (Midnight Marquee Press, 2000), I tried several times to reach actor Russell Wade. I had heard that Wade was a good friend of Chaney Jr.—another friend being related to Lon's wife, Patsy Beck Chaney. Wade also had a walk-on part in POSTAL INSPECTOR (1936), a film featuring Lugosi, and had worked with both Karloff and Lugosi on THE BODY SNATCHER in 1945.

Russell Wade contributed to three of producer Val Lewton's pictures THE LEOPARD MAN, THE GHOST SHIP (both 1943), and THE BODY SNATCHER. Since the classic Val Lewton productions have finally made their way to DVD, it seems appropriate now to publish excerpts of a phone interview I had with Russell Wade just over eight years ago, in 1996. At the time, Wade's health was poor. He had just recovered from a stroke. I would patiently check in with his wife once or twice a month to see if he was well enough for an interview. At last, one day in June 1997, I was given the okay ...

Scarlet Street: Do you remember ACE DRUMMOND, an airplane adventure serial based on a comic strip supposedly written by Eddie Rickenbacker? Russell Wade: Yeah, I remember it. John King and Jean Rogers were the leads. Lon Chaney and I were in it. John King did quite a few things. I worked with him again later, on one of the last pictures I made. So our careers have kind of gone together. SS: That was RENEGADE GIRL in 1946. What would a typical day be like on a serial? Long hours?



RW: Hell, yes! They worked you! They really worked! It's work. It's not fun! Yeah, they turned 'em out!

SS: The scripts were about the size of a

small phone book?

RW: They were rather large! (Laughs) SS: You were friends with Lon Chaney Jr. Some people found him loud and overbearing, while others thought him shy and withdrawn.

RW: He loved to hunt and fish. That was his bag. He was married to a nice gal, and he was very open with her. I know that when I left films to go into the real estate business, he gave me a briefcase. He was very nice to me. He was kind of quiet; that's right. He was in OF MICE AND MEN on the stage. He was excellent! He did the film with Burgess Meredith, too. It was a hell of a picture!

SS: There were those who said he couldn't act, that he was riding on the coattails of his father.

RW: Well, that's natural for people to say. He hadn't proved himself; he hadn't done anything for people to think differently. His father was a big star—I mean, the biggest! That's pretty tough for a child to come up to that. He was a good man, though, and he set everybody on their ear when he did OF MICE AND MEN in Hollywood. They really noticed him! He was a nice fellow. I liked him very much.

SS: During filming of THE BODY SNATCHER, Bela Lugosi was ill. RW: Well, he was ill, yeah. Karloff

RW: Well, he was ill, yeah. Karloff and Lugosi didn't get along too well, but it didn't show. They both did their jobs, and they were very nice. Karloff was a great actor in spite of all those horror pictures he made. I don't know about Lugosi. They both were very professional. They did their work and that was it. They knew their lines—at least Karloff did. And they were very professional. They [the Holly-

Continued on page 74

VAL LEWTON

Continued from page 36

It soon becomes apparent that Jacqueline—forever looking for something to give meaning to her life—had fallen in with Palladists, initiates of an esoteric, mysterious, and vaguely sinister fraternity. Mary consults none other than the esteemed Dr. Louis Judd (Tom Conway again, suggesting that VICTIM is a prequel to CAT PEOPLE) for advice. Further help is offered by stoic Gregory Ward (Hugh Beaumont), failed poet Jason Hoag (Erford Gage), and timid private investigator Irving August (Lou Lubin). Virtually everyone else Mary encounters—Esther Redi (Mary Newton), who has bought Jacqueline's business; employee Frances Fallon (Isabel Jewell), whose worship of Jacqueline more than hints at lesbianism; and one-armed Natalie Cortez (Evelyn Brent)—has connections to the sect.

Jacqueline has abandoned the society, marking her for death per its bylaws—but she must not be met with violence from an outside source. Only suicide is an acceptable penance, which doesn't seem too much to ask of a woman who keeps an apartment empty but for a chair and a hangman's noose. Jacqueline has "run to death" her whole life, but now, as the Palladists attempt to gently coax her into taking poison, she's decided that—as another poet, Dorothy Parker, once put it—"you might as well live."

Éventually, after being let go and taking one of Lewton's famous walks—as Alice does in CAT PEOPLE when she's stalked by Irena, as Teresa does in THE LEOPARD MAN when she's stalked by the panther, as Betsy and Jessica do in I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE as

Recollections of Simone Article and Interview by Roy Frumkes



t was 1992, and I was the features editor for a home theater magazine called The Perfect Vision. Mainly I was writing filmoriented articles, or gathering them from writers I knew. TPV organized its quarterly issues by theme, and the Fall issue was going to be film noir. I sat in my office tracking down femmes fatales for mini-interviews, to punctuate the flow of longer articles. I

found Marie Windsor, who was friendly, Ann Savage, who was wary (but pleased with the results), and, most amazingly, Simone Simon, who was

. well, you shall see.

I'd spent many childhood evenings in the early 1950s sitting in the center of a New Rochelle, New York, living room petrified with fear, legs pulled up onto the seat of the chair lest something bite my feet, watching the Val Lewton films on a black-and-white console TV. Where were my parents? Upstairs? Out for dinner? At a party? I forget. But I'll never forget the chilling image of Karloff's luminous corpse (part lighting, part makeup, part optical printer) falling against Henry Daniell at the end of THE BODY SNATCHER (1945), his disembodied voice intoning "You'll never get rid of me, Toddy . . ."-all of which scared the hell out of me. A close second came Simone's simmering malevolence, the shadows, the screech of the bus, Tom Conway's predatory psychiatrist falling prey to the mid-European creature—CAT PEOPLE (1942)! In some way, everything I've done of an artistic nature comes from these palpable, evocative nights, alone in the dark with Lewton's stock company.

So it was a thrill to reach Simone in her Paris domain, where she'd been ensconced for 40 years since retiring. I don't know what I expected from an 82-yearold woman. I certainly wasn't expecting to get sliced into mincemeat by a quick, feline intelligence that

toyed with me from afar:

Roy Frumkes: Hi, Ms. Simon! My name's Roy Frumkes, and I'm the features editor of a magazine called The Perfect Vision . .

Simone Simon: When you say Perfect Vision, it's very cute, because I can't see anymore.

Roy: (gulp) Oh, my god .

Simone: I can't see well, I can't write, and I can't read. And your magazine is called Perfect Vision. Isn't it lucky!

Roy: (backpedaling feverishly) I-I'm real sorry

to hear .

Simone: Well, what is your magazine about? Roy: It's a high-end audiovisual magazine about laser technology, and the latest issue is about film noir . .

Simone: Oh, you speak French, now? (Pause) I'm expecting my boyfriend in a few minutes. I can talk to you until he gets here. I'm writing my autobiography and I'm fed up with me, and I'd like you to talk to me about somebody else.

Roy: Okay. I'd like to know your opinion of film noir. Some of your films-like CAT PEOPLE-are considered to contain noir elements.

Simone: Film noir. No, I've never heard of it. Roy: Jacques Tourneur, who directed you in CAT PEOPLE, has done some noir classics, such as OUT OF THE PAST. Did you see that one?

Simone: I didn't see it. As a matter of fact, I never saw Jacques Tourneur before or after the picture. We worked for 18 days on the picture-three weeks. It was quite an adventure.

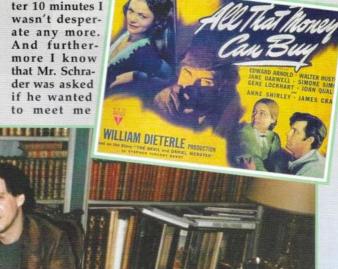
Roy: Did you see the 1982 remake of CAT PEOPLE? Simone: (purring mischievously) Yes . . .

Roy: What did you think?

very desperate

at first, but af-

Simone: I think I should have stayed in bed, frankly. I was in Deauville for the film festival. I was very sad that it had been remade. Jacques Tourneur and Val Lewton and I had made this little B picture with all our hearts, and I was





and he said "no"-and it's a good thing because I would have told him off. (Baiting me) What did you think of it?

Roy: Certainly, in keeping with the liberties allowed filmmakers in the eighties, it was the exact opposite of the original in terms of what was shown and what was suggested.

Simone: Hmmmm .

Roy: But I did think it had some nice qualities. Simone: Tell me about these nice qualities . .

Roy: Technically, the editing had a languorous pace, and the cinematography was also very feline and sensuous.

Simone: Interesting. I didn't notice the languorous editing. (Pause) I have a fan who sent me seven video cassettes-CAT PEOPLE, CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE, LA RONDE, LA BETE HUMAINE, LE PLAISIR, THE DEVIL AND DAN-IEL WEBSTER, and JOSETTE.

Roy: (impressed) How nice.

Simone: Very nice of him, but they're of no use to me, because we can't show

VHS France. Roy: (feebly attempting

to keep up

with her)

Since he's

such a fan, why don't you ask him to send you a VHS machine?

Simone: Well, why would I do that? I can't see it anyway.

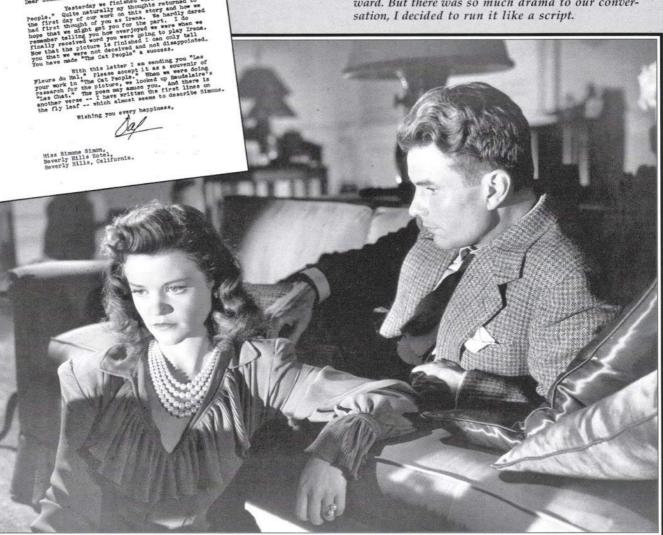
And so it went. She was always one move ahead of me, always engaging me in a game of verbal cat and mouse, setting me up and then pouncing. But she loved the finished piece, as I found out to my delight when I called her months later.

Simone: Mr. Perfect Vision! I was going to call you up as a matter of fact. I'd forgotten the title of your magazine, and when it first arrived, I thought it was someone playing me a bad joke. But then I had someone read it to me, and it was very amusing. Lots of life in it.

Roy: Oh, good . .

Simone: Except personally-and this is not a reproach-I'm sorry that you said Jacques Tourneur, Val Lewton, and I put all our hearts in CAT PEOPLE. We did, of course, but you can't act alone; there was Kent Smith and Jane Randolph, too. The way it was in the magazine made me sound a little bit self-centered and pretentious. Roy: I'm sorry I neglected to mention them. But you know, we've received so many wonderful comments about the article. Everyone loves it. Simone: Why?

Roy: The other interviews were fairly straightforward. But there was so much drama to our conver-







PAGE 38 BOTTOM: Roy Frumkes visits the ever-lovely Simone Simon in her Paris apartment in 1993. PAGE 40: Simon and Kent Smith enact a scene from the first of producer Val Lewton's horror classics—CAT PEOPLE (1942). PAGE 40 INSERT: A genuine rarity, courtesy of Roy Frumkes and Scarlet Street—the letter sent to Simon by Lewton at the completion of filming CAT PEOPLE. LEFT: Marie Claudel (Simon) shocks the other occupants of the GIRLS' DORMITORY (1936) when she embarks on an affair with the school's headmaster. RIGHT: Simon starred with James Stewart (as an unlikely Parisian) in the sentimental favorite SEVENTH HEAVEN (1937).

Simone: You have a very nice voice.

Roy: Thank you.

Simone: You are tall, small, short, big . . . ?

Roy: I'm six feet tall. Simone: Slim . . .? Roy: Well, average . . . Simone: Young? Roy: I'm 48.

A pause, then a sigh on the other end, then laughter.

Roy: I guess if I ever get to Paris, we should get together. Simone: I would certainly be happy to receive you and offer you a nice cup of tea, like I did in CAT PEOPLE.

Roy: I would love to visit you.

Simone: Well then, let's get straight to the point.

When do you think you'll come?

Roy: Well—it might have to wait till the Summer. Simone: Oh, but then you'll be 48 and a half!

The magazine was not footing the bill for my trip, so I tried to schedule as many encounters as possible, to make myself feel better about the expense. I met with Roman Polanski, and with Ludmilla Tchérina, both of them wonderful experiences—but the centerpiece of the visit was to be Simone. The feline sensuality and mystery of her screen persona (still abundantly evident in her flirtatious phone conversations with me), along with her disappearance from the film world in the fifties, had fascinated countless movie addicts over the decades. If she were checking to see if she could still lure men into her lair, she had snared herself one more willing victim.

I arrived in Paris and stayed with Marie-Christine D'Usseau, the widow of Arnaud D'Usseau, a friend and former blacklisted writer who ended up in Europe penning HORROR EXPRESS (1973) and working for pay-but-not-credit on Samuel Bronston's sixties epics. Marie-Christine had a charming fifth floor walk-up two blocks off the Champs Elysee. Simone said it was close to where she lived. As I began walking toward her address, I wondered what I would find. Would she be bent and shriveled and unrecognizable? Was she down on her luck and living in some squalid little garret? She had given me no clues as to her current status, except to warn me that I could spend 10 years counting her wrinkles.

I was getting closer and closer to the Arc de Triomphe, and hadn't come across Rue de Tilsitt yet. The day was unseasonably mild; Paris looked old and inviting (in spite of the absurd vision of a McDonald's on my right). It was a charming city to be in, and whatever happened, there would always be the pastries . . .

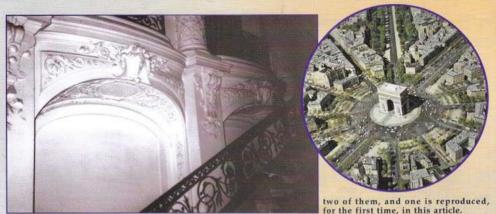
Rue de Tilsitt, I was surprised to discover, was the street that immediately encircled the Arc de Triomphe. And many of the buildings lining the street were miniature palaces built, I later learned, by Napolean for his grand marshals, though not completed in his lifetime. Simone had told me that her building would have three doors and that I should use the second. I found it, and it was indeed one of Napoleon's mini-palaces. As I entered into a courtyard through a huge, ornate black gate, and approached the second door, I was prepared to pick her name out of a list of tenants. I imagined these edifices having been subdivided many decades ago and the rooms rented as apartments.

However, hers was the only name. I buzzed and was buzzed in—to a 30-foot high entrance hall! I found myself looking up 20 marble stairs to a landing beyond. I was getting nervous. I knew Simone had done well in her day; she'd even had a mansion in Hollywood during her Fox years in the thirties. But this was unsettling. I climbed the stairs and walked down a short hall-

I climbed the stairs and walked down a short hall-way to a door which opened as I approached, where-upon I was greeted by a servant who instructed me to put my coat on a wine-colored couch. I stepped into a dark vestibule and a door opened to my right. There she stood, erect and elegant, in a light purple dress with her hair up, wearing dark glasses and jewelry around her neck—a necklace of transparent crystals, and another holding a small crucifix about two inches high. I saw at once that all her negative hype had been purely mischievous: she was a beautiful, older version of her screen image, and there were no 10-year's-worth of wrinkles to count.

She invited me into a high-ceilinged living room the size one usually finds in a museum. (Imagine the Victorian room in the third act of 1968's 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY, only MGM didn't have the budget to build a set as sumptuous as this one.) Outside the windows, not that you'd choose to look, was a spectacular view of the Arc de Triomphe.

She led me to an armchair and sat down on the couch next to it. I was intrigued as I studied her face.



She, of course, couldn't see me, though at one point she got up, took off her glasses, and with clouded blue eyes peered at me from a distance of several inches, finally declaring, "You're very handsome. And vou're not 48. You're 26.

We discussed her life, and mine. Her memory of details concerning her films was incredible. Midway through our talk, she grabbed my arm and took me for a walk around her cavernous apartment, through the living room, an equally huge drawing room, her bedroom, and a wonderful little angular corridor separating the last two. Another room was hung with paintings and drawings, most of them hers, many in an impressionist vein. She gave me

In her bedroom, in a large walk-in closet, she had several volumes of memorabilia from her film and stage careers. We pulled them out and spent hours pouring through the material. A few of the stills, and few of the letters from Val Lewton, etc., she let me have. Before she died, she had the Cinématheque Fran-

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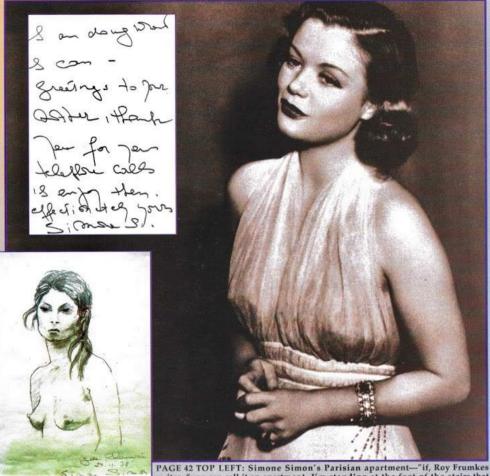
Over the years I flew back and visited her twice more, always having great fun and stimulating talk with her and her less talkative boyfriend, Alec, who was two years her junior. Alec Weisweiller was married, but separated from his wife, Francine, a patron of the arts whose home was the subject of a short 16mm film VILLA SANTO-SOSPIR, in which Jean Cocteau, her semipermanent house guest, painted the entire villa, transforming it into a unique work of art, and later using it in his film TESTAMENT OF ORPHEUS (1960). Alec and Simone had been together for 40 years-she had given up her career for him-and while they lived separately, he saw her every day. He was hard of hearing, and she couldn't see, so I witnessed some amusing moments courtesy of their dueling infirmities.

After the first visit, when I got back to New York, I called her every few weeks. At one point, she told me that she'd been depressed in the year before my first visit as her eyes deteriorated, and had felt like life was no longer worth living, but that my visit and my friendship had restored her spirit. From then on I called her every week for 10 years, occasionally taping the calls when she was in a mood to discuss her career. I ended up with over 20 hours of tape on her life.

Every summer she would go to Deauville for several weeks vacation with Alec. Even in her nineties, when she could no longer get around, and spent all of her time confined to bed, she continued to make the summer peregrinations to the country. She was in perfect mental shape until nearly the end, but I stopped calling her several months before she died because she was no longer feeling well enough to converse with me.

Following are some of Simone's memories about her Hollywood days.

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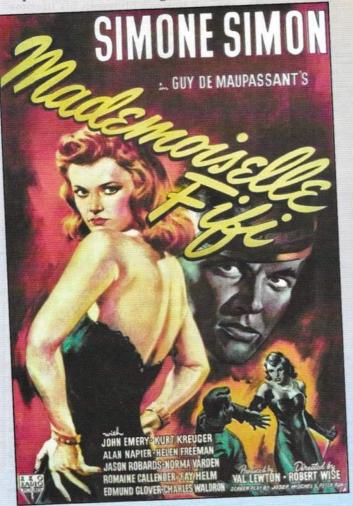
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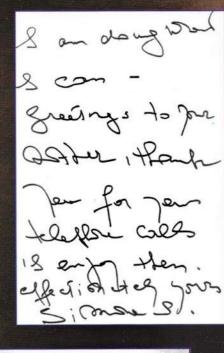
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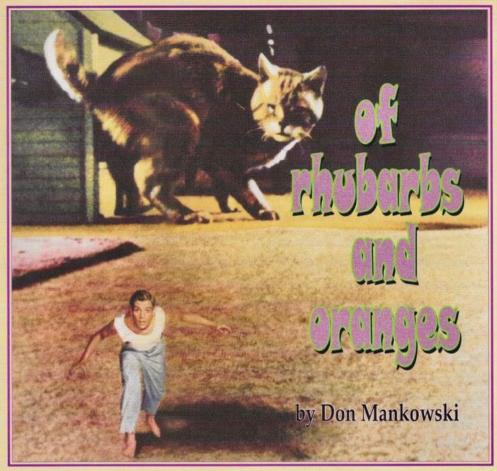
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YOUR FAVORITE CREEPS TOGETHER AGAIN!

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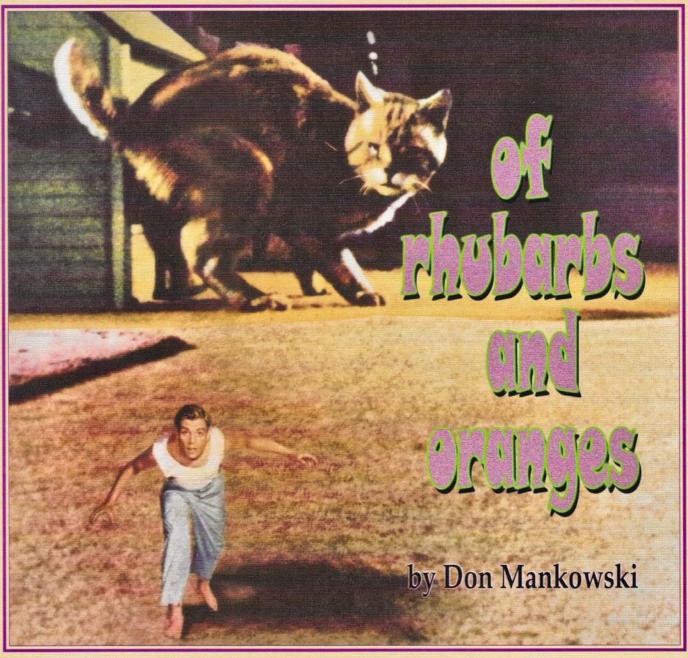
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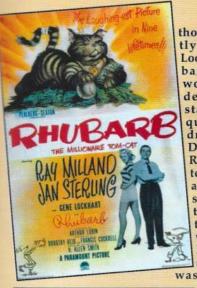
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LEFT: Orangey owned a fur coat even before he became a movie star. Here he is (with Ray Milland, seated) in his sole starring vehicle—RHUBARB, the story of a cat who inherits a baseball team. RIGHT: Orangey has just learned that he won't be credited in THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN and takes out his frustration on leading man Grant Williams. As can be seen from the photo, Williams was almost as short as Alan Ladd.

He would brag that he'd tutored everything animal from aardvark to zebra. While the man has fond memories of most of his menagerie, he wasn't particularly fond of Orangey, and the feeling was mutual.

"Inn's hands and forearms are mottled with the marks of Orangey's disapproval," wrote Louis Berg for the Los Angeles Times. Still, Frank Inn knew where his bread was buttered—or rather whence came the marmalade—and managed to coexist with the critter. Paramount Pictures had in fact advertised for a "foul-tempered, scar-faced sourpuss of a cat." Berg notes that the cat spat at him during the "interview."

"The first day we worked, the beast deliberately bit me in the leg," reported director Arthur Lubin. "I was quick enough to retaliate with a shrewd kick which sent him spinning. Fortunately, the Humane Association representative was not looking. From then on the cat and I had a good actor/director relationship. He was cruel and nasty to everyone on the set, but he respected me and kept his distance." (Lubin had already directed Francis and would later direct a horse named Ed. He wisely avoided kicking contests in those ventures.)

On RHUBARB, some 20 or 30 tabbies of similar appearance and demeanor were hired to serve as standins and doubles. Each cat would get bored swiftly, but there was always a fresh feline at the ready, and catnip

for emergencies. Police dogs were stationed strategically to keep the players from wandering off the set. Producers William Perlberg and George Seaton had scouted for supporting players amongst 227 entrants at the annual Hollywood Cat Show.

Orangey's contracts between the Murray family and the film's producers were routinely approved by Superior Court Judge Alfred Paonessa. Minimum airline and hotel standards were thus assured for promotional tours, such as one that the celeb cat made with Rhubarb author Smith during the 1951 World Series. Lloyds of London provided insurance on Orangey's lives, all nine of them.

Like many popular films of its day, RHUBARB got a tryout as a comic book. Dell Comics weekly title Four Color featured Rhubarb, the Millionaire Cat three times, in September 1952 (#423), May 1953 (#466), and June 1954 (#563). Alas, it never became a regular series—the competition from fellow Four Color critters Donald Duck, Porky Pig, and Bugs Bunny must have been too fierce for the colorful feline.

RHUBARB was Orangey's one and only star vehicle. He'd never again be a central character, but would instead provide actors with someone off whom to play, act as window dressing, perform bits of business, or serve as a Greek chorus of sorts.

LEFT: Orangey proves his versatility by playing a horse in an episode of OUR MISS BROOKS (1952-56). Okay, we're lying, but that <u>is</u> Robert Rockwell and Eve Arden as Philip Boynton and Connie Brooks. RIGHT: What a feline won't do for a little screen time! Orangey won a Patsy Award for his performance opposite—or rather, between—George Peppard and Audrey Hepburn in BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S (1961).





The CBS television series OUR MISS BROOKS featured the weekly travails of Connie Brooks, an unmarried high school teacher. Connie, played by Eve Arden, was preoccupied with snagging a husband. Robert Rockwell was Mr. Boyton, the usual object of her unrequited affection, and Gale Gordon, one of the all-time great sitcom supporting players, was Principal Osgood Conklin. The 1952-1956 series, a comedy classic, originated on radio, where it played from 1948 to 1952



in search

Miss Brooks' clueless landlady, dear old Mrs. Margaret Davis (Jane Morgan) has a cat named Minerva. Don't be fooled by the name-it's our old pal Orangey in drag. Minerva also appeared in the 1956 feature film version of the show.

"Eve Arden is making plans to receive another youngster into her home, but this time the new arrival will be a kitten," reported *The Washington Post* in February 1954. "Seems that 'Rhubarb,' who portrays the family cat 'Minerva' on OUR MISS BROOKS, is about to become a father, and Eve has already placed her order for one of the ginger cat's offspring." Indeed, some of Orangey's later stand-ins were his descendants, admitted Frank Inn.

Orangey's vivid coloration can be appreciated for the first time in Technicolor in THIS ISLAND EARTH (1955). Here, scientists from Earth (Faith Domergue and Rex Reason) are covertly recruited to fight in an alien war in a distant solar system. The film, directed by Joseph Newman (assisted by Jack Arnold), showcases much of what was good and bad about fifties science fiction. When Orangey shows up in the terrestrial laboratory, scientist Ruth Adams (Domergue) introduces him to her colleagues:

"We call him Neutron because he's so positive."
Now, just one atom-picking nanosecond! Neutrons aren't positive; they're neutral! The cat should have been named "Proton." Some physicists, these! ("Electron" might have been more appropriate, given the independent reports of Orangey's negative behavior. Then again, a positively charged ion is known as a "Cation"—three syllables, please. Wouldn't that have been an inspired choice?) Neutron can detect the aliens' electronic eavesdropping where humans cannot, but he's not involved in the interplanetary battles that ensue.

Scott Carey (Grant Williams) is accidentally exposed to chemicals and radiation and begins to lose height and mass. He's THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN (1956), a true classic of sci-fi based on a novel by Richard Matheson and directed by Jack Arnold. In a harrowing scene, Carey-only a few inches tall-is attacked by his own pet cat. The cat, of course, is Orangey, displaying his mean side on film for a change.

Special effects have the cat towering over Scott, and toying with its tiny prey in predictable fashion. The man's only hope is a daring escape into his house's cellar. Unfortunately, his distressed wife, Louise (Randy Stuart), believes that the cat has eaten him, and doesn't bother to look for him any further. (You'd think that they'd have performed a swift autopsy, or at least sifted the litter box for several days.) It's a crisis faced by precious few housewives, with no support group, and she's found closure. Poor Scott will have to face his ultimate fate desperately alone, something he does in exciting and inspirational fashion.

Paying tribute to the man's courage, a news commentator reads out Scott's epitaph. "His death resulted from an attack by a common house cat, a former pet in the Carey household." Yeah, former pet ...

Here, pussy pussy pussy pussy pussy pussy Here, pussy pussy pussy pussy pussy pussy Here, pussy pussy pussy pussy pussy pussy Where's the gosh-darn cat?

-The Ritz Brothers, The GOLDWYN FOLLIES (1938)

It's more than a little difficult to track a cat's professional appearances when said puss pussyfooted before the cameras several hundred times over the course of some 15 or 16 years—longer than even an actor with nine lives might reasonably expect to work. It's harder still when that darn cat had dozens of stand-ins and stunt doubles at his beck and call. Historian Don Mankowski came close to throwing a hissyfit over the seemingly endless credits for the feline alternately known as Rhubarb and Orangey, but ultimately he did a fine job of tailing his subject.

Still, some sightings are questionable, and Mankowski chose to relegate most of them to this sidebar while he hit the main bar for the hair of the-well, not

dog, that's for damn sure.

Can that be Orangey in 1948's charming comedy drama I REMEMBER MAMA (Warner Home Video, \$19.97), directed by George Stevens some three years before the temperamental tabby achieved stardom in RHUBARB (1951). There's certainly a resemblance, even when the story has the sexually suspect "Uncle Eliza-

beth" dressed in bandages.

Even if the cat's an imposter, I REMEMBER MAMA is well worth a look. Based on Kathryn Forbes' 1943 memoir Mama's Bank Account, the film tells the genuinely heartwarming story of a Norwegian family in 1910 San Francisco. Irene Dunne shines (and scrubs and cooks) as mama Martha Hanson, and receives solid support from Barbara Bel Geddes as daughter Katrin (the book and film's Kathryn), Philip Dorn as papa Lars, Steve Brown as son Nels, Peggy McIntyre and June Hedin as younger daughters Christine and Dagmar, and Ellen Corby, Hope Landin, and Edith Evanson

Continued on page 71

TOP: Orangey or imposter-Uncle Elizabeth in I RE-MEMBER MAMA (1948). BOTTOM LEFT: THE MATCHMAKER (1958, with Paul Ford and Shirley Booth) has none of the Jerry Herman songs that enlived its musical version (HELLO, DOLLY!), but it has Orangey-or has it? BOTTOM RIGHT: Is it Orangey who has a walk-on (run-on, actually) in MY SISTER EILEEN (1955, with Betty Garrett)?







OF RHUBARBS AND ORANGES

Continued from page 49

The cat attack footage resurfaced in the comic documentary IT CAME FROM HOLLYWOOD (1982). It provided narrator Cheech Marin a chance to state, with farcical irony, that he'd never before seen a man eaten

by a pussy.

THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK (1959) is a mostlytrue tale of grim survival in Nazi-controlled Holland. Several Jewish families and individuals go into hiding in a garret above a shop, and their lives play out under claustrophobia and the constant threat of discovery. In a tense scene, a cat's nocturnal excursion almost betrays

the hideaways' presence. The miscreant was played by Orangey. George Stevens directed the honored film, which starred Millie Perkins, Joseph Schildkraut, and Shelley Winters.

By this time, Frank Inn was claiming that Orangey had made 250 or more appearances in movies or TV shows, and that he required 15 pounds of food each day. If that ration seems excessive, it's because it was for nine or 10 cats, each capable of doing

a different trick. Some were good jumpers; others could dive or swim. Some stand-ins were gray or yellow striped rather than orange, but could be used for blackand-white photography. Obviously, a film scholar trying to spot each and every Orangey appearance faces an

impossible task.

In his acclaimed 1957 television and Broadway play VISIT TO A SMALL PLANET, Gore Vidal used the terrestrial sojourn of an alien from a distant galaxy to score satirical points. The playwright was not at all happy that the starring role in Norman Taurog's 1960 film version of his work was given to Jerry Lewis. Spaceman Kreton (Lewis) wants to understand the quaint and unfamiliar social habits of Earth's humans. Incidentally, he notes that his hosts' dog and cat are constantly at odds. As he can mentally converse with both animals, he negotiates a peace treaty between them. The cat is Orangey, supplied here with a feminine voice-over.

Audrey Hepburn won praise for her role as "party girl" Holly Golightly in BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S, directed by Blake Edwards and based on a 1958 novel by Truman Capote. The very flighty Holly has a rollercoaster ride to true romanceand her cat, very sensibly named Cat, must go along.

LEFT: Orangey had more dialogue than Jackie Gleason in GIGOT (1962), a comedy drama in which the Great One played a Parisian mute. BELOW: Basil Rathbone expresses delight that Orangey (billed as Rhubarb) received better billing than he did in THE COMEDY OF TERRORS (1963).

Thought lost, Cat turns up wet but salvageable for a

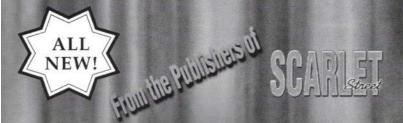
happy ending.

From time to time, Rhubarb author Smith would demand a piece of the action from the cat's profits, claiming ownership of the moniker. This explains why our subject was occasionally billed as "Orangey," as "Cat," sometimes not at all. This was one star who truly didn't care what the marquee read.

"With all the cats in Paris, and it's filled with them," wrote Hedda Hopper, "Gene Kelly flew master cat trainer Frank Inn and six identical toms over the pole to Paris. Their names: Rhubarb, Golden Boy, Little Britches, Oscar, Little Boy, and Old Rube. He also took with him famous trick dog Skippy who danced years ago with Kelly, plus four mice all for Jackie Gleason's GIGOT.

Gigot is a poor janitor whose only pleasure in life comes from attending funerals. He gets to attend his own from a distance after being accused of theft and thought lost after some comic predicaments. As Gleason plays his Chaplinesque role mute, his scenes with the cat evidence a unique rapport. GIGOT (1962) is a minor film, but noteworthy as the product of three masters of pantomime-Gene Kelly (who directed), Gleason, and Continued on page 71





SEEPER, CREEPERS

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Produced by Bruce Kimmel*Executive Producers:Richard Valley & Tom Amorosi*Cover Art by Frank Dietz

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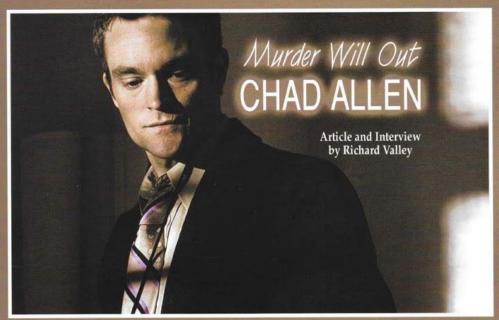
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n the 1960s and 1970s, in the periods just before and after the Stonewall A just before and after the Stonewall riots that launched the modern gay rights movement, gay private eyes (the fictional kind, anyway) were a genuine rarity. Society was undergoing enormous cultural changes, but on the mean streets of detective fiction the "norm" consisted of such straight-arrow tough guys as Ross McDonald's Lew Archer (though campared to such salies and streets). though, compared to such earlier gum-shoes as Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe, he was pretty cool with mi-norities) and Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer (though, compared to the Ku Klux Klan, he was not).

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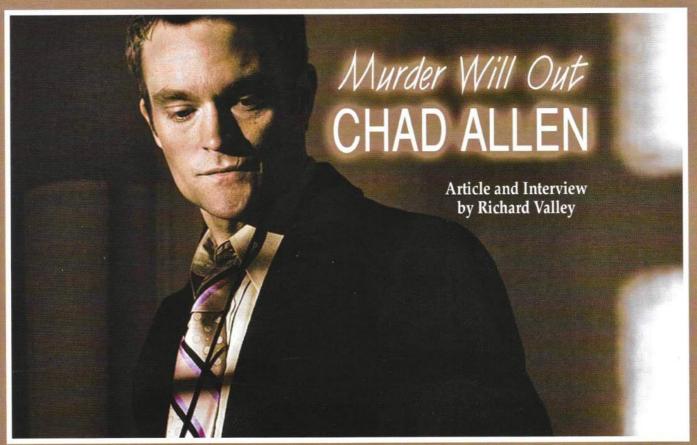




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CA: I haven't read all of them yet, but I read three or four of them. I have all of them and I'll read them as we film each title. I went through them to see what pieces I could pull out for my characterization. I've done a few true-life stories and films based on books. It's always an interesting balance, taking a character as it was in the book and then creating a character for the film. Sometimes they're identical; often they're different characters with some similarities. Obviously, in the books Stratchey is a somewhat different character. He's in his forties, so we brought him down significantly in age and brought Timmy Callahan up a little bit in age. Other than that, I think the Stratchey in the books is—person-ality wise—very much like the way I play him. Richard's working on more books, now; the series has fired him up to get back into writing for Stratchey. He's a great guy; he's really just fan-tastic. I met him in Philadelphia when we had the world premiere of the film, and I made him promise that he would come to Vancouver and hang





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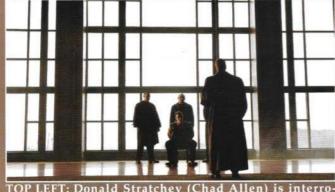
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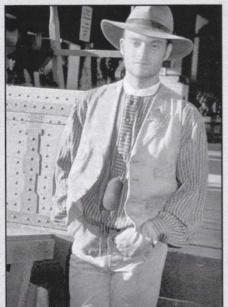
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TOP: During his heyday as a teen idol in the early eighties, Chad Allen appeared as a regular on a number of TV series, including OUR HOME. He's pictured with Deidre Hall, who played his mother. ABOVE: In costume for DR. QUINN, MEDI-CINE WOMAN, a series set in the Old West. It was while appearing on this show that Allen was outed by The Globe and advised to quickly find himself a girlfriend.

out with us when we make the next one. ICE BLUES is the next one. SS: Mystery elements aside, does THIRD MAN OUT presents an accurate picture of two men in a relationship?

CA: I think so. In the books, the relationship is much more open. Stratchey talks about the struggle he has being with just one partner. In the film, we present a much more monogamous re-lationship. That's something I really wanted to create, because I don't think there are enough examples of good, monogamous, healthy relationships in the gay community. I'm not suggesting that relationships that aren't monogamous are unhealthy, but we already see open relationships a lot and I wanted to present a different kind of relationship. I think the relationship we've created in the film is really special, They're really, important to each other, and I think it's very realistic. They're not without their squabbling; they're very different people. What was important to me was that Stratchey—on his own—would probably fall apart. He doesn't do really well. He has this beat-up old car. He can't quite get his life together. If not for Timmy, I don't think he would. Timmy's kind of the glue that holds it together. Stratchey looks like the guy who's holding it together, but Timmy's really the one who keeps the relationship moving forward.

SS: In the novels, Timmy comes across as somewhat more self-righteous and judgemental than he does in the film.

CA: Yes, and Stratchey's really the dominant one. I just wanted to mix that up a little. More than anything, I wanted Stratchey to be as dimensional as I am in my life. I find that I run the gamut from being goofy and campy at times to being dead serious—all in the same day. Most of the characters in films aren't that dimensional, and I saw a real opportunity to create one that was. I think that's what people seeing THIRD MAN OUT are able to identity with a lot; they really like what we've created. I hope at the end of the day that-a couple of sexuality points aside-these are films that even my dad would like to watch. He and I used to watch the COLUMBO series on TV all the time and I want this series to be that much fun.

SS: Sebastian Spence, who plays Timmy, is heterosexual. How difficult is it to film a same-sex love scene when one of the actors is gay and the other is straight? CA: You know, I waited a long time to finally be able to do a gay love scene in a film. I've done a lot of straight love scenes in my career, with everybody from Helen Hunt to Soleil Moon Frye on PUNKY BREWSTER. My first kiss in life was a girl on a movie set. So for me to finally have the opportunity to hopefully put aside some of the extra work that has to go along with creating a love scene-to have the opportunity to do it with a man-I was excited about it. Unfortunately, the other actor-Sebastian Spence-was straight and he was very scared. On the one hand, I wanted to be very supportive and understanding, which I think I was—as was Ron, the director. But also, I had to be clear that the scene was really, really important to me that we represent positive examples of gay sexuality. In my life, I had to struggle for a long time to see gay sex as beautiful and full of lovejust because of the background I came from-and so it was important to me to present beautiful, loving examples of gay sexuality. So at the end of the day, I had to say, "Look, you're going to have to figure out a way that you can do this so we can show some beautiful love in this movie, or else this is not the right part for you. And Sebastian really got that. He was scared, but he did it and when it was over I said, "See? I'm nothing to be afraid of." (Laughs) Between you and me, I think he really enjoyed it. SS: It's impossible to read about a gay

film without someone mentioning that he had trouble doing the love scene and that he has a wife and 12 kids.

CA: Exactly. I thought it was something special when they first came to me to talk about making these movies, one of the first things that the president of here! said to me was that they wanted me to do this because I'm openly gay. There really aren't that many of us-still-who fall into the leading man category in any way, who are openly gay. My partner, Rob-ert Gant from QUEER AS FOLK, is another one, and we've banded together with our third partner, Chris Racster, to create Mythgarden, our production company. We're trying to turn the page on what's being done in gay and lesbian filmmaking.

SS: As a gay man and a former child star, you actually jumped two hurdles in achieving an adult career.

CA: It's amazing! I've been acting since I was five and now I'm 31. My roles have progressed from playing the youngest child to the middle child to the big brother—all these different roles, and now I'm playing the cop instead of the kid who's getting arrested. I'm playing the dad instead of the troubled son. That's a jump that you don't see a lot. There simply aren't a lot of actors who can successfully make that transition. I'm so grateful for it. The work has always mattered to me more than anything else, and I hope that has something to do with it. Maybe I've just been a hell of a lucky guy-either way, I'll take it. I'm auditioning now with 35-year-old guys and I shake my head and think, "Wow! I'm a real man, now!" (Laughs) It's so funny, but when you've been acting your whole life you judge certain things in terms of the part you're playing. I look around the room at auditions and think, "Okay, I guess that's what it looks like to be my age, now." I've known actors in my life who are just amazing-far better actors than I-and they don't get the shots that I've had. You've just got to say thank you, and put one foot in front of the other and do the work. SS: It's quite a journey from the cover

of Tiger Beat to the Advocate. CA: I'll say! There were plenty of people who said I couldn't do it. Plenty of people who said without a doubt that, if I came out, my career would be over. Period! I'm very happy to say they were wrong. I'm having a hell of a lot more fun nowadays than

when I had to pretend.

SS: The subject matter of THIRD MAN OUT is, obviously, outing. Had it al"It's nice to actually be in a time when we're making such quality gay entertainment. We're making not only detectives films that are gay, but gay horror films. In place of women with big tits running around, we've got hot guys with their shirts off. I love it! It's all fun and unapologetic. We deserve it!"

ready been decided to make that the first film in the series before you were cast, or was that the result of drawing on

your life experience?

CA: It had already been decided. I'm not sure why they chose THIRD MAN OUT as opposed to starting at the beginning, although the books don't really have a time sensibility to them. It doesn't really matter what order they're filmed in; they just chose THIRD MAN OUT for whatever reason. It came out good, and it was nice to have the actors that we had on board—they're a great bunch.

SS: Before you came out in the pages of the Advocate, The Globe, a supermarket tabloid, published photos of you kissing another man in a hot tub at a party. Did you think it was going to

end your career?

CA: Oh, yeah! I was young and scared. This had never really been done to anyone before, especially someone who was starring on a top-ten televi-sion series. Still to this day, the only episode of DR. QUINN that doesn't run in syndication is the episode where we talk about gay rights. The producer wrote the episode specifically in response to what I was going through, to show support for me. It was a very loving thing to do. In the episode, Walt Whitman comes to town and it showed the attitude of all the townspeople to a gay man. It was very well done, but to this day that episode doesn't run on Hallmark or any other network that show the series. It's still considered a controversial episode.

SS: The theme of outing in THIRD MAN OUT is handled ambiguously. The character John Rutka, played by Jack Wetherall, makes a strong argument that the people he's outed are gays who actively work against the gay community. What's your feeling? Do you think

outing is ever justified? CA: I don't. I don't because I have a belief in the sanctity of each individual human being and their personal journey. The bottom line is, there are ways to effect change that are good ways. Going and reaching into somebody else's world-no matter how horrifying their lives may look to me-and making it about them instead of what I need to do is not a place that I ever want to be coming from. The fact is, I don't care if anybody who's gay and harboring fear in their hearts ever has the spotlight turned on them. I would just as soon that anybody who comes out of the closet do so as their own choice, that they can be individuals who feel that their sexuality is a positive thing. That's the kind of person I want to represent our community, not these guys who are afraid and hiding. I don't know what their journey will be like. Hopefully, that fear can begin to dissolve, and down the road good things will come of that.

SS: There's a backstory in THIRD MAN OUT that isn't in the novel. It concerns Stratchey having actually outed someone in the service.

CA: It was something that I actually had a hand in. When I'm creating a character, I look for those big arcs. I

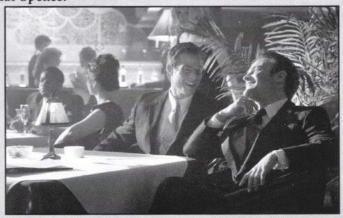


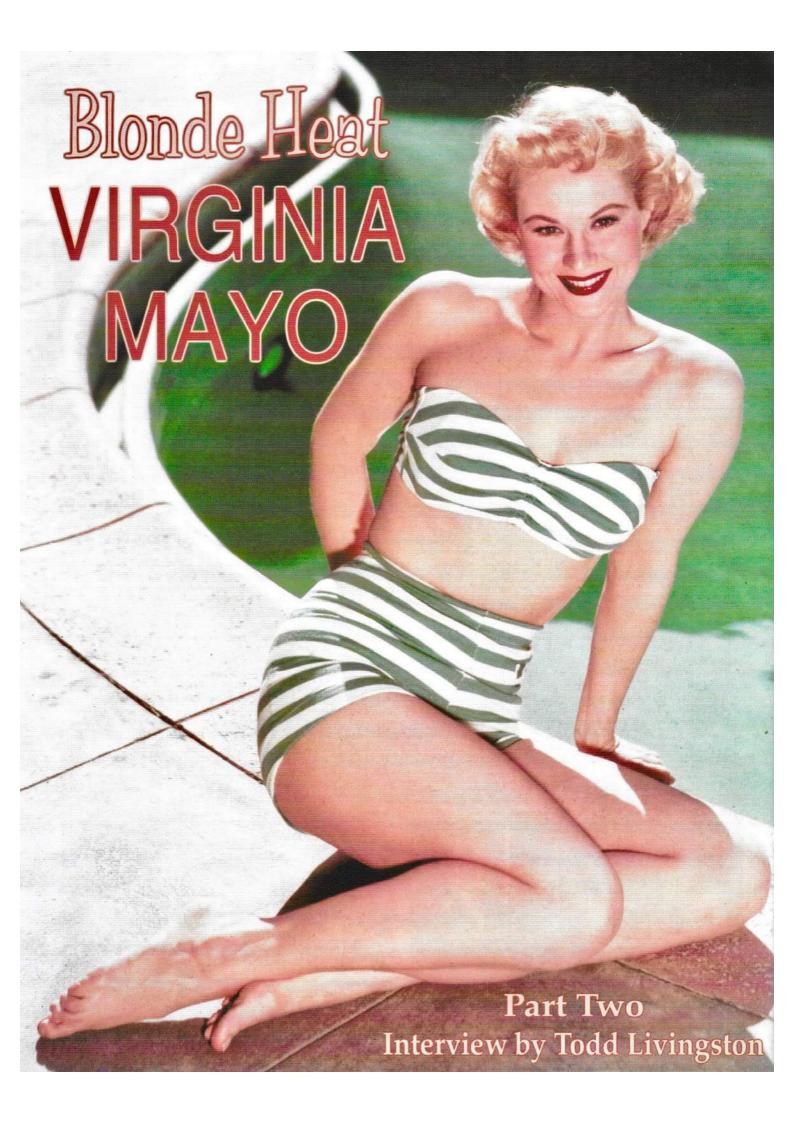
want as big a possible journey for the characters I play as we can create. I knew that Donald needed more secrets. I wanted to create a character through which we could tell a lot of stories over a lot of time, because I hope the series will go on for awhile. We can create from that-not just from the books, but other stories, too. So I talked with the producers about finding some good secrets for Donald. There are a couple of hints in the film, some of which are from the book and some of which aren't. The military one was a big one. And the business of him having a hand in outing another individual in order to save his own ass, at a time when the military was actively pursuing gays-that was interesting to me. It gave the character a dark place and something we could examine. I didn't want a squeaky clean character. That's no fun at all. Donald is not a person who gets along all that well in the world. He does well with his partner, but other than

Continued on page 82

Chad Allen considered it vital that THIRD MAN OUT present Donald Stratchey and his partner, Timmy Callahan (Sebastian Spence), in a loving, supportive relationship. Naturally, that included a nude love scene, which resulted in a bad case of nerves for the heterosexual Spence.









Last issue, Scarlet Street Scribe
Todd Livingston recounted his
meeting a number of years ago with
Virginia Mayo and the subsequent
interview. Livingston described Mayo,
who died on January 17, 2005, at the
age of 85, as "a genuine star with a
capital 'S.' She'd worked with Danny
Kaye, Bob Hope, Ronald Reagan,
James Cagney, Boris Karloff, Peter
Lorre, Burt Lancaster, Gregory Peck,
Dana Andrews, and dozens of other
legendary names. Here, in the conclusion of Scarlet Street's Virginia Mayo
interview, the Star with the capital
"S" recalls Hollywood in the fifties
and beyond . . .

Scarlet Street: One of your most famous films—and certainly one of the best—is WHITE HEAT.

Virginia Mayo: Oh, yes! I enjoyed working with Jimmy Cagney; he was very easy to work with, because he was so wonderful as an actor. In particular, I remember the scene where he finds out that I've killed his mother. I'm escaping; I'm trying to get away and he grabs me in the garage. I could hardly talk, because he grabbed me—not to hurt me, but because he was in character—and I couldn't talk very well. And I had to say, "I didn't do it!" I could hardly get out the line! (Laughs)

SS: You tell one lie after another all through the film.

VM: Yeah! So I'm telling him I didn't do it and I'm sorry. (Laughs) It was really good to work on that picture. I had Raoul Walsh—my favorite director. He was doing the picture and he wanted me in it. I don't recall if I did a test or not; I don't remember that. Raoul always wanted me in his pictures. He wrote a book and said I was the best actress in Hollywood!

SS: Did Walsh help you create the role of Verna?

VM: Well, he knew what Verna should be—he wanted her to be kind of flip. In one scene I'm standing on a chair, looking at myself in my new mink coat, and Jimmy kicks the chair out! They both came to me and said, "Can you do that? Can you fall back like that and not get hurt?" I said, "Sure, I can do that." And so we did! I was a dancer, and a dancer knows how to fall. Oh, yeah; that was fun! I really enjoyed working with Jimmy and Raoul. They were great!

SS: After WHITE HEAT, you worked with another tough guy, George Raft, in RED LIGHT.

VM: George Raft asked for me for that one. I had to be loaned out from Warner Bros. It wasn't a good part, just an ordinary one. He had a scene where he was supposed to slap me and he wouldn't do it! Such a gentleman; he didn't want to slap me!

Come on; that's all part of acting! But he was very nice, George Raft.

SS: He was famous for turning down roles that made a lot of other people famous. Humphrey Bogart took a lot of his roles that he turned down.

VM: Raft didn't know enough about acting. Bogart was something, wasn't he? I never got to work with him, but somebody said in a book that I was married to Humphrey Bogart. Well, I wasn't! (Laughs) There was this woman named Mayo Methot. They don't do any research, these people. So I've gotten myself married to Bogie!

SS: You worked with director Vincent Sherman on BACKFIRE.

VM: Oh, he was fine. That's the first time I worked with any contract director at Warner Bros. except for Raoul Walsh, and Vincent was very good and very nice. I didn't like the part I had; it was nothing gutsy like I had with Raoul. Vincent really didn't like the story of the movie all that much. He was forced into doing it, but he said all the actors were very good. When the studios had contract people, they tried to use them as much as they

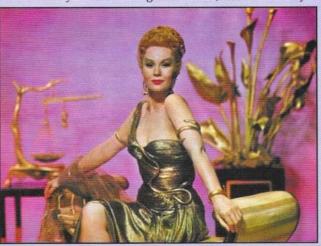
could. They cast me in this picture called AL-WAYS LEAVE THEM LAUGHING with Milton Berle, because of my name. Well, that's a step down if there ever was one! I spoke to Jack Warner's assistant and I said, "No, I don't want to be in this picture. Why should I? It's a terrible part!" I started crying and said, I'm a dancer! I want to dance in pictures!" They said, "Oh, well, if you do the picture then we'll put you in some musi-So I said, "Okay." That's all I needed-just a little agreement to do something I'd be good in. They kept their bargain, the studio. I got to dance in SHE'S WORKING HER WAY THROUGH COLLEGE, which was a really good picture for me. It had Ronald Reagan, Phyllis Thaxter, and Patrice Wymore. She was a dancer, too, and she was good. It was very successful, and the studio took note when you had a hit. It was so cute! Ronnie played a college professor and they were kicking me out of school because I'm a burlesque star. Silly? Pretty silly, huh? (Laughs)

SS: But fun! What was Ronald Reagan like when he was an actor? Was he into

politics even then?

VM: No, I could never see that. He was very nice to work with, because he was such a gentleman. My musical partner was Gene Nelson, who became a very good friend. We danced together in six musicals. We were great together; we were a good team and he was wonderful. That was a great period in my life, doing those musicals, because I just wanted to dance so much. Dancing is the most fun there is to do in life! Of course, it's also very difficult-ask any ballerina. Ballerinas sacrifice their lives to be dancers, because they have to practice every day; they cannot sluff off and not take care of themselves. That was the best part of my life-dancing! When I was with Goldwyn, he also had Vera-Ellen under contract, who was a darling person. She danced-she danced extremely well-and did all kinds of tough stuff. I couldn't ask him to put me in a dancing role, because he had her. He'd have said, "Listen, I don't need you to dance; I have her!" (Laughs) So, I didn't get to dance until I got to Warner Bros. You know, age has its effect on dancers—but I still had it even at the age when I was doing all those dramatic parts.

SS: Warner Bros. had a history of putting their musical talent in gangster roles. VM: They wouldn't let Dennis Morgan sing! He was put in dramatic parts all the time. There were exceptions. When Warners made THE WEST POINT STORY, we were all cast in that. Gordon MacRae got to sing, and Gene Nelson and I got to dance, and Doris Day







PAGE 57 BOTTOM RIGHT: Virginia Mayo models the latest Biblical fashions for THE SILVER CHALICE (1954). LEFT: Ronnie explains Reaganomics to a skeptical Gene Nelson and Mayo in SHE'S WORKING HER WAY THROUGH COLLEGE (1952). RIGHT: Having taken acting lessons from Burt Lancaster for SOUTH SEA WOMAN (1953, with Mayo in the title role), Chuck Connors finds that he can't stop smiling.

was in it. At the time, I heard through the grapevine that she didn't want me in the picture and was fixing to get her husband, Martin Melcher, to fix it so all my scenes were taken over by her. How about that!

SS: That's a slap in the face!

VM: What a nervy girl! But she didn't like any women in her pictures. Later on, her husband negotiated all those big starring roles with Cary Grant and a lot of other big stars. That's what happens when a woman has a man working on the inside. She didn't change the

studio's mind. Jimmy Cagney wanted me to play his girlfriend in THE WEST POINT STORY, and so I did. But still who wouldn't want to work with Cary Grant?

SS: Well, you <u>did</u> get to work twice with Cagney, and with Burt Lancaster in THE FLAME AND THE ARROW and SOUTH SEA WOMAN.

VM: Oh, yes! Burt was coming to Warners to start his own production company, and of course I was under contract. They knew I could play Lady Anne in THE FLAME AND THE ARROW

very well. I didn't have any trouble switching from tough dames to princesses. I could do that very easily and Burt knew I'd be a good person for his picture. So I played that part and I <u>loved</u> doing it.

SS: What was Lancaster like off camera? VM: Very nice, very intelligent. He had this brain and he was always working it. He'd read a lot. He wore glasses and he was always very businesslike. We had a love scene in THE FLAME AND THE ARROW, and he was so manly; he had all these muscles! He was a circus

LEFT: An all-star cast made asps of themselves in Irwin Allen's THE STORY OF MANKIND (1957), but only Virginia Mayo (as Cleopatra, with Helmut Dantine as Marc Antony) got bitten by one. RIGHT: In this publicity still for THE SILVER CHALICE, Paul Newman displays his gams in a cunning little cocktail dress while an uncomfortable Mayo considers trading in her wooden sofa for a Castro Convertible.





"When Warners made THE WEST POINT STORY, we were all cast in that. Gordon MacRae got to sing, and Gene Nelson and I got to dance, and Doris Day was in it. I heard that she didn't want me in the picture and was fixing to get her husband, Martin Melcher, to fix it so all my scenes were taken over by her. How about that! All of us were a little group acting together at Warners. There was Gene, Gordon, and me—and not Doris!"

performer. Circus performers have muscles in their eyebrows! He'd grab me and I swore I had black and blue marks all over my arms. That's the way he did things; he was just all wound up all the time-poor guy! Anyway, he grabbed me to kiss me and—oh, my God—his teeth were so big I thought he was going to break mine! (Laughs) I couldn't blame the guy; he was just doing what he thought it was part of the scene. But it was an ordeal, I tell you! That love scene was not good!

SS: A recent biography hinted that Lancaster was bisexual.

VM: Well, God, he had five children! (Laughs) I never heard of that. I don't believe it, because he was married to this woman, Norma, and obviously they had a good marriage because they had so many kids.

SS: SOUTH SEA WOMAN was your second film with Lancaster.

VM: It was supposed to be a comedy, but a lot of people didn't know that! (Laughs) We had a lot of fun making it, because we got thrown in the water and all our clothes shrunk! It was shot on the lot-no location work-and Burt loved to direct everybody. Not me-he never did it with me—but he always had Chuck Connors off in a corner. "Chuck, I want you to do it like this." Burt would get all worked up and tell Chuck how to do the scene. Everybody else was oblivious-the director, Arthur Lubin, was oblivious-but I could see what he was doing. Burt just loved to direct! SS: Was Connors receptive?

VM: Well, sure! It was his first picture; he'd never done anything before. He was miscast, I think.

SS: Speaking of first pictures, Paul Newman made his film debut opposite you in THE SILVER CHALICE.

VM: He's a very talented actor, but he didn't like THE SILVER CHALICE at all. I didn't like what they did to his hair-awful. And he had to wear what he called his cocktail dresses. (Laughs) The studio sent us to a coach together. She was terrific. I latched onto her because my part was very difficult for me; I didn't know how to do it! She told me how, so I was glad that I got to work with this woman. Paul never liked working on it, and it showed in his acting; he wasn't really free. When you see his other pictures—like THE HUS-TLER—he's more loose. He didn't know how to do a classical part, really. He complained about it. He put an ad in one of the trade papers about how THE SILVER CHALICE wasn't a good thing for him to do. He's a very fine person. I can see that-now!

SS: You made THE IRON MISTRESS with Alan Ladd.

VM: I enjoyed the picture; I loved Alan Ladd. He was a really nice guy. I feel that he was sort of punished by Hollywood. They talked about his inability to act. They thought he wasn't tough. Well, he wasn't tough; he was a nice person who was always gentle with people. He wasn't another Bogart like. It wasn't his style, and when he was photographed he looked-oh!-gorgeous. Gorgeous face, beautiful face! I'll never forget one scene—I was supposed to be a scatterbrained woman. I'd promised to marry him and I renegged on my word and married someone else. His face when I told him-I never saw any actor have such a sad expression. It was so full of feeling. You don't see that on John Wayne. He's a tough guy, always tough. Well, Alan was very sensitive in his own way, and he could act certain parts that John Wayne would never have been able to act.

SS: One of your costars in CONDO CROSS-ING was Peter Lorre.

VM: Oh, yeah! He was such a creative actor. He'd find ways of lighting a cigar or a cigarette and make it a big important scene. He'd just make it dramatic-he had that ability. His acting was very different, because he played heavies with that face of his. He could embellish anything!

SS: Was there any one picture that was es-

pecially fun to make?

VM: Oh, yes—THE GIRL FROM
JONES BEACH. We had Eddie Bracken in it. He was such fun! He was always joking! And Dona Drake was in it, too; she played Eddie's girlfriend and was so cute and she was such fun. She had a pet monkey at home, and she was married to Billy Travilla, the dress designer. He did my clothes wonderfully for SHE'S WORKING HER WAY THROUGH COLLEGE. Fabulous designer! Dona was so funny; she was a darling person. SS: Did you enjoy making horror pictures? You had a trio of them.

VM: Let me see-there was CASTLE OF EVIL, THE HAUNTED, and EVIL

SPIRITS. I enjoyed them! I always have enjoyed acting. My whole career-I've

just loved acting! They were pretty good parts in those films. Well, THE HAUNT-ED wasn't too good. I went to Arizona to do some retakes and Aldo Ray was drunk-he couldn't do 'em!

SS: So what happened? VM: We didn't do 'em! (Laughs) There's a big gap in the picture; it's not a complete picture. For EVIL SPIRITS we filmed in a house down in Los Angeles. The story was taken from a newspaper article about a woman who had people come live in her house. Then she'd take their money-they're all on Social Security-and kill them. The woman paid for it. She had to go to prison, I think. EVIL SPIRITS had Karen Black in it. And the director forgot to film a scene with the two of us. I said, "Look, we didn't do this scene yet. I'm in this scene!" He forgot! So that was another sloppy production.

SS: What would you consider the highlight of your career?

VM: The dancing parts that I enjoyed so much. With such a wonderful dancer as Gene Nelson-we did some good work together in all those musicals. I was so sorry when he died. He had cancer. I went to the hospital to see him and he showed me the wound he had. He wasn't doing anything about curing







LEFT: In a subtle example of gay subtext in THE GHOST SHIP (1943), Captain Stone (Richard Dix) asks Third Officer Merriam (Russell Wade) if he'd like to be a pawn or a queen. CENTER: Does this woman know how to accessorize or what? Kiki (Jean Brooks) makes a grand entrance in THE LEOPARD MAN (1943). RIGHT: Director Mark Robson (left) and producer Val Lewton (right) discuss YOUTH RUNS WILD (1944) with three members of its cast—Glen Vernon (who later played The Gilded Boy in 1946's BEDLAM), Jean Brooks, and Kent Smith.

VAL LEWTON

Continued from page 37

they travel to the hounfort—Jacqueline returns to her apartment and meet her neighbor, Mimi (Elizabeth Russell), in the hallway. "I hardly move," murmurs the doomed prostitute, "yet it keeps coming closer all the time—closer and closer. I'm dying. I rest and rest and yet I am dying." "And you don't want to die," says Jacqueline. "I've always wanted to die. Always."

Minutes later, Mimi, dressed in her best finery, overhears a chair overturn in her neighbor's room. Jacqueline, unable to fight her lifelong despair, has succumbed to it. Mimi, however, is hungry for just one more night on the town. (As Mehitabel, the alley cat with questionable morals created by yet another poet—Don Marquis—put it: "There's a dance in the old dame yet.")

Mimi's is a futile gesture, perhaps, but at least she chooses to rage against the dying of the light.

"And so you're dreadfully disappointed and dreadfully hurt. The whole world seems to have turned against you just because you made a mistake. That's almost the captain's voice, Tom. 'I didn't make a mistake. I couldn't make a mistake. I'm authority. I'm the captain . . .'"

—EÎlen Roberts (Edith Barrett), THE GHOST SHIP

Despite its title, THE GHOST SHIP (1943) has little to do with overt seafaring specters. The film is rather a sinister psychological variation on MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY (1935), with the insane Captain Will Stone (Richard Dix) taking a newly arrived officer, Tom Merriam (Russell Wade), under his wing.

Stone—whose first name, Will, is no accident, just as Tom's feminine surname seems equally deliberate—sees much of himself in his younger, attractive under-

ling, and proceeds to school him in the ways of authority. Gradually, however, Merriam begins to suspect Stone in the "accidental" deaths of several crew members. Revealing these suspicions, he becomes a target himself.

Interestingly, the film features almost no women save Ellen Roberts (Edith Barrett, who was married at the time to an actor at least as sexually ambiguous as Captain Stone-Vincent Price). Ellen carries a thankless torch for the captain. Stone forthrightly states that he can love no woman, and certainly takes a much more active interest in Merriam (and, one suspects, other seamen over the years) than Ellen. Perhaps Stone's repressed homoerotic desires, simmering inside but never quite expressed for fear of being labeled "unmanly," have driven him to insanity-rendering him the masculine twin to CAT PEOPLE's Irena Dubrovna. Both Stone and Ellen suffer as fools in a foredoomed relationship; a vague commitment (for conventionality's sake?) bonds the pair in loveless misery. Both probably, soberly, realize that they have thrown their lives away on each other, and despair because of it.

It's noteworthy that THE GHOST SHIP's screen-writer, novelist Donald Henderson Clarke, also provided the source material for the 1931 film MILLIE, in which a blatantly homosexual relationship is carried on between characters played by Joan Blondell and Lilyan Tashman. (Another of Clarke's novels—1931's *Impatient Virgin*—would form the basis of gay director James Whale's Universal production IMPATIENT MAIDEN the following year.)

The only crewman with the ability to see though Stone's façade is an eerie deaf-mute named Finn (Skelton Knaggs). Via voiceovers, he acts as a sort of Greek chorus throughout the film; we know his sympathy for Merriam and wariness toward Stone. The film ends with the Finn killing the Captain (thus freeing Merriam from

Continued on page 61

LEFT: Boris Karloff, Mark Robson, and Val Lewton argue over the check on the set of BEDLAM. CENTER: A lurid theater lobby display for CAT PEOPLE (1942). RIGHT: Appearing to a lonely child (Ann Carter), Irena Dubrovna (Simone Simon) is the beautiful but dead embodiment of THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE (1944). PAGE 61 BOTTOM: Promotional art for a proposed Lewton monster rally that never came to pass.







Lessons From Lewton

Robert Wise

interviewed by Kevin G. Shinnick

ou'll search far and wide to find another filmmaker as versatile as the late Robert Wise. The director's extensive filmography spanned every genre from film noir (1947's BORN TO KILL) to sci-fi (1951's THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL) to to horror (1963's THE HAUNTING) to musicals (1965's THE SOUND OF MUSIC).

Wise began his career as an editor, working on such classic pictures as THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME (1939), THE DEVIL AND DANIEL WEBSTER (1941), and

TOP RIGHT: Robert Wise, who wisely learned much from producer Val Lewton. BELOW: Bela Lugosi contributed a splendid cameo to the Wise-directed THE BODY SNATCHER (1945), starring Boris Karloff.

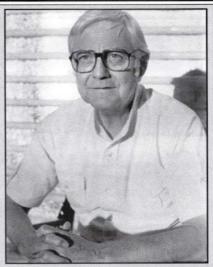


that perennial list-topper of best films, CITIZEN KANE (1941).

His directorial bow came as a result of his involvement with the famed Val Lewton horror unit at RKO, where he helmed THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE (1944), MADEMOISELLE FIFI (1944), and THE BODY SNATCHER (1945).

In this excerpt from Scarlet Street's three-part interview (Issues #25, #27, and #29), Robert Wise discussed his Lewton films and the influence of Val Lewton on his career . . .

Robert Wise: I love that man so much-and I owe him so much, too, because he started me directing. I've worked with some other creative producers-John Houseman, particularly-but Lewton was the most creative producer I ever worked with. He had written several books, romantic adventure stories, before he was 21. I don't think there's one of his films that he didn't do the final shooting script himself, but he would never take credit for it in his own name. When we got down to THE BODY SNATCHER, Philip McDonald was the writer and did the original script. But when the film was done, the union said somebody else's name had to go on, too, that McDonald didn't do enough. They forced Val to put his name on, so he took a pen



name: Carlos Keith. One of his books was put out under that name, so when you see BODY SNATCHER, you see Philip McDonald and Carlos Keith—and Carlos Keith is Val Lewton. Val just had so much input to all of these films—the look of the film, the photography and the sets, and the actors and the casting and the costumes and all. He had so many marvelous ideas without ever trying to supercede the director. He was the greatest supporter of a director that you could possibly imagine. He just wanted to get everything the best he could for his films, and that's how he got such marvelous quality in those lowbudget pictures.

SS: Val Lewton was supportive of his

SS: Val Lewton was supportive of his crew, but nevertheless he replaced the original director of THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE, Gunther von Fritsch, with you.

Continued on page 63

VAL LEWTON

Continued from page 60

his entrapment) and taking his place alongside "the

boy" in command of the ship.

On the directorial front, Mark Robson, editor of CAT PEOPLE, delivers an aromatic slice of atmosphere and encroaching dread, making fine use of the cramped, claustrophobic ship's quarters.

"No, it's not true. Everything you say is a lie. You're a poor, lost woman . . ."

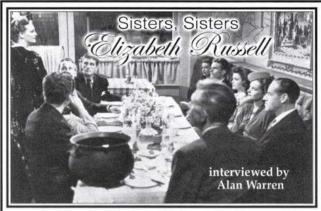
—Julia Farren (Julia Dean), THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE

Every Lewton horror film has considerable merit, but with THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE (1944) Lewton and codirectors Robert Wise and Gunther von Fritsch created something brilliant and unique, full of what critic James Agee keenly observed was "the poetry and danger of childhood."

Oliver Reed (a returning Kent Smith) has found wedded semi-bliss with Alice (Jane Randolph again). Their child, Amy (Ann Carter), is aloof and dreamy, given to introspection and flights of fancy. Among Amy's "imaginary" friends is the spectral Irena (Simon), a benevolent influence on the girl. (No mention is made of the pe-

culiar affliction that plagued Irena in life.) Amy, unable to connect in any meaningful way with the "real" world around her, withdraws from it and finds solace in her own mind, much like the young protagonist of Conrad





lizabeth Russell, dubbed the "Houri of Horror" by the Hollywood Reporter, is best remembered for her roles in four of producer Val Lewton's horror films at RKO-CAT PEOPLE (1942), THE SEVENTH VICTIM (1943), THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE (1944), and BEDLAM (1946)-and the nonhorror YOUTH RUNS WILD (1944).

She also appeared opposite Bela Lugosi in THE CORPSE VANISHES (1942) and Lon Chaney Ir. in the Inner Sanctum mystery WEIRD WOMAN (1944), and was the homicidal lesbian spirit of Mary Meredith in THE UNINVITED (1944).

The following interview, in which Russell discussed, among other subjects, her "horrifying" costars, is excerpted from Scarlet Street #20 . . .

Elizabeth Russell: These men in person are just ordinary actors. They may seem a lot different on the screen, but not in person.

Scarlet Street: What led to your meeting Val Lewton and appearing in the classic CAT PEOPLE?



ER: I was out for dinner one night, at this Italian place on the strip, with Maria Montez. She was with Peter Viertel, Deborah Kerr's second husband, and I was with this German man with a title-a count or something. I didn't know him. Maria knew him. Anyway, we were sitting in a booth, and Maria said, "She doesn't know how beautiful she is." And someone else said, "You should be in pictures." That was very flattering, of course, and at one point one of the men said, "I have a friend named Val Lewton, and he's making a picture about cats, and you'd be perfect for it. You're exotic looking." I said,
"You mean I look like a cat?" So I went to see Val Lewton the next day, and he offered me the part. That picture has become a classic. It's in the Museum of Modern Art, because it was the first sychological suspense film.

SS: There's that memorable scene in which you speak in Serbian, calling Simone Simon your "sister"-in other words, a cat person. ER: They dubbed me in that. They shot the scene, and then they dubbed in Simone Simon's voice over mine. Since she was French, they thought she sounded more exotic, more foreign. Then, when Val and Jacques Tourneur saw it, they both said, "Well, that was a mistake. We should have used your voice." But it was too late by then. SS: What kind of man was Lewton?

ER: Val was an innovator. He pioneered the concept of the psychological film. But there were things about him that most people don't know. For example: one night Val wanted me to come to his home for dinner. Bob Wise and Mark Robson would both be there. Well, Val arrived with his son, who was about 12 years old; they lived at Rogers Ranch in the Palisades. And sometime that night he told me he was a Communist. At the time, it was a shocking thing, although I didn't think much of it until later. Communism was pervasive in radio and throughout academia, but it wasn't until later that

I thought how grave it was to say that to me. There's kind of a sequel: many years later, I opened a newspaper while I was living in Washington, D. C., and in the art section it said. "Val Lewton's showing of his paintings in Washington." And I wondered who this could be, because Val was long dead. So I called the art gallery, and it was his son, Val Lewton Ir.

SS: Many fans consider your role as Barbara Farren in THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE your finest hour.

ER: I didn't care one way or the other about it. My part was a little longer than in CAT PEOPLE, but that was about all. You know, for actors it's a very easy business once you get the clue. There's a big difference between acting in films and stage acting.
SS: You appeared in Universal's WEIRD

WOMAN, based on the classic Fritz Leiber novel Conjure Wife.

ER: We were hysterical on that film. We were so tired from laughing. Every time I think about that movie, I remember us getting overtime. Once the cast gets laughing, it's contagious. Evvie [Evelyn Ankers] and I had a hard time keeping a straight face all the way through it.

SS: Were there any roles that you were mentioned for but didn't get?

ER: Oh, yes, many. I got so close to things and never got them. One picture wanted was to be made at RKO for Val Lewton. They wanted to put me under contract, but my agent held out for more than \$500, so I lost the part. It may have been for BODY SNATCHER; I'm not sure.

SS: You've described your role in THE SEVENTH VICTIM, that of a consumptive neighbor of the lean Brooks character, as a "vignette."

ER: It was just a bit part, but when you worked with Val Lewton, he built it up. He made it into something. Tom Conway was in that, I remember. He was a nice man, but an alcoholic, I knew his brother [George Sanders] better. You wouldn't know they were brothers; they didn't look alike at all. Tom was a darling man, but he had this monkey on his back. George drank, but not to excess. I suppose George got disgusted with Tom's drinking.

SS: How well did you know Sanders? ER: He was a beau of mine. He asked me

six times to marry him. SS: Your last film for Val Lewton was BED-LAM, which you played for comedy.

ER: BEDLAM was directed by Mark Robson. Frankly, it was kind of a silly, tipsy drinking scene. I don't like those kinds of pictures. But if you do one kind, they can't think of you doing anything else. I free-lanced for a while, and when I came back to Lewton I did

the part. SS: Did you like working with Boris Karloff? ER: Boris Karloff was an Englishman. He was the star of the picture, and he didn't let you forget it. He had a lisp and he seemed so old. He had no truck





LEFT: Lon Chaney Jr. comforts Elizabeth Russell, who has just realized that she's in an Inner Sanctum mystery at Universal and not a Val Lewton classic at RKO. The picture is WEIRD WOMAN (1944). RIGHT: Scream queens Evelyn Ankers and Elizabeth Russell meet in WEIRD WOMAN. Russell, however, usually elicited more screams than she gave, BELOW: The Reed family (Kent Smith as Oliver, Ann Carter as Amy, and Jane Randolph as Alice), teacher Miss Callahan (Eve March), and the law (Mel Sternlight and Erford Gage) look on as Barbara Farren (Elizabeth Russell) succumbs to the despair at the core of Lewton's horror films. For Julia Farren (Julia Dean) in THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE (1944), a lifetime of needless regret has come to end.

with the rest of us; we were just players, and he was in love with himself. SS: Was Lugosi friendlier than Karloff?

ER: Lugosi was very affable-and he had quite an accent! Well, he was Hungarian, wasn't he? But Karloff was pure English. To me, the English always spoke down to the Americans-vou know, to the provinces.

SS: There are a lot of horror stories about working with child actors. What was your experience with Ann Carter in THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE?

ER: Oh, well, she was a perfectly normal child. You wouldn't know she thought about spooky pictures at all! (Laughs) SS: And what about Julia Dean, who played your mother?

ER: She was a famous actress at one time. I didn't know who she was, but Val Lewton knew her very well. She seemed to be pretty old, then, but now

maybe she wouldn't seem that way (Laughs) I didn't know her that well. SS: Was the character of Mimi in Lewton's THE SEVENTH VICTIM supposed to be a streetwalker?

ER: She might have been. She had tuberculosis. She knew she was dving and she was going to go out and eniov herself for the last time.

SS: You worked with such Lewton directors as Jacques Tourneur, Robert Wise, Mark Robson

ER: Well. Mark and Bob had both been working in the cutting room and Val Lewton took them out of there. Now, Tourneur, he was a very good director.

SS: On THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEO PLE, you started with Gunther von Fritsch and then Robert Wise took over.

Continued on page 81



ROBERT WISE

Continued from page 61

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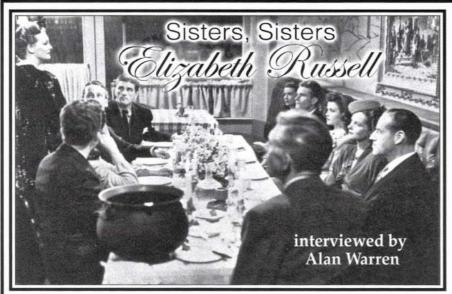
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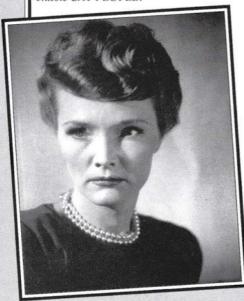
lizabeth Russell, dubbed the "Houri of Horror" by the Hollywood Reporter, is best remembered for her roles in four of producer Val Lewton's horror films at RKO—CAT PEOPLE (1942), THE SEVENTH VICTIM (1943), THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE (1944), and BEDLAM (1946)—and the nonhorror YOUTH RUNS WILD (1944).

She also appeared opposite Bela Lugosi in THE CORPSE VANISHES (1942) and Lon Chaney Jr. in the Inner Sanctum mystery WEIRD WOMAN (1944), and was the homicidal lesbian spirit of Mary Meredith in THE UNINVITED (1944).

The following interview, in which Russell discussed, among other subjects, her "horrifying" costars, is excerpted from Scarlet Street #20...

Elizabeth Russell: These men in person are just ordinary actors. They may seem a lot different on the screen, but not in person.

Scarlet Street: What led to your meeting Val Lewton and appearing in the classic CAT PEOPLE?



ER: I was out for dinner one night, at this Italian place on the strip, with Maria Montez. She was with Peter Viertel. Deborah Kerr's second husband. and I was with this German man with a title-a count or something. I didn't know him. Maria knew him. Anyway, we were sitting in a booth, and Maria said, "She doesn't know how beautiful she is." And someone else said, "You should be in pictures." That was very flattering, of course, and at one point one of the men said, "I have a friend named Val Lewton, and he's making a picture about cats, and you'd be perfect for it. You're exotic looking." I said, You mean I look like a cat?" So I went to see Val Lewton the next day, and he offered me the part. That picture has become a classic. It's in the Museum of Modern Art, because it was the first

psychological suspense film. SS: There's that memorable scene in which you speak in Serbian, calling Simone Simon your "sister"—in other words, a cat person. ER: They dubbed me in that. They shot the scene, and then they dubbed in Simone Simon's voice over mine. Since she was French, they thought she sounded more exotic, more foreign. Then, when Val and Jacques Tourneur saw it, they both said, "Well, that was a mistake. We should have used your voice." But it was too late by then.

SS: What kind of man was Lewton? ER: Val was an innovator. He pioneered the concept of the psychological film. But there were things about him that most people don't know. For example: one night Val wanted me to come to his home for dinner. Bob Wise and Mark Robson would both be there. Well, Val arrived with his son, who was about 12 years old; they lived at Rogers Ranch in the Palisades. And sometime that night he told me he was a Communist. At the time, it was a shocking thing, although I didn't think much of it until later. Communism was pervasive in radio and throughout academia, but it wasn't until later that

I thought how grave it was to say that to me. There's kind of a sequel: many years later, I opened a newspaper while I was living in Washington, D. C., and in the art section it said, "Val Lewton's showing of his paintings in Washington." And I wondered who this could be, because Val was long dead. So I called the art gallery, and it was his son, Val Lewton Jr.

SS: Many fans consider your role as Barbara Farren in THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE your finest hour.

ER: I didn't care one way or the other about it. My part was a little longer than in CAT PEOPLE, but that was about all. You know, for actors it's a very easy business once you get the clue. There's a big difference between acting in films

and stage acting.
SS: You appeared in Universal's WEIRD
WOMAN, based on the classic Fritz Leiber
novel Conjure Wife.

ER: We were <u>hysterical</u> on that film. We were so tired from laughing. Every time I think about that movie, I remember us getting overtime. Once the cast gets laughing, it's contagious. Evvie [Evelyn Ankers] and I had a hard time keeping a straight face all the way through it.

SS: Were there any roles that you were men-

tioned for but didn't get?

ER: Óh, yes, many. I got so close to things and never got them. One picture I wanted was to be made at RKO for Val Lewton. They wanted to put me under contract, but my agent held out for more than \$500, so I lost the part. It may have been for BODY SNATCHER; I'm not sure.

SS: You've described your role in THE SEVENTH VICTIM, that of a consumptive neighbor of the Jean Brooks character, as

a "vignette."

ER: It was just a bit part, but when you worked with Val Lewton, he built it up. He made it <u>into</u> something. Tom Conway was in that, I remember. He was a nice man, but an alcoholic. I knew his brother [George Sanders] better. You wouldn't know they were brothers; they didn't look alike at <u>all</u>. Tom was a darling man, but he had this monkey on his back. George drank, but not to excess. I suppose George got disgusted with Tom's drinking.

SS: How well did you know Sanders?
ER: He was a beau of mine. He asked me six times to marry him.

SS: Your last film for Val Lewton was BED-LAM, which you played for comedy.

ER: BEDLAM was directed by Mark Robson. Frankly, it was kind of a silly, tipsy drinking scene. I don't like those kinds of pictures. But if you do one kind, they can't think of you doing anything else. I free-lanced for a while, and when I came back to Lewton I did the part.

SS: Did you like working with Boris Karloff?
ER: Boris Karloff was an Englishman. He was the star of the picture, and he didn't let you forget it. He had a lisp and he seemed so old. He had no truck





LEFT: Lon Chaney Jr. comforts Elizabeth Russell, who has just realized that she's in an Inner Sanctum mystery at Universal and not a Val Lewton classic at RKO. The picture is WEIRD WOMAN (1944). RIGHT: Scream queens Evelyn Ankers and Elizabeth Russell meet in WEIRD WOMAN. Russell, however, usually elicited more screams than she gave. BELOW: The Reed family (Kent Smith as Oliver, Ann Carter as Amy, and Jane Randolph as Alice), teacher Miss Callahan (Eve March), and the law (Mel Sternlight and Erford Gage) look on as Barbara Farren (Elizabeth Russell) succumbs to the despair at the core of Lewton's horror films. For Julia Farren (Julia Dean) in THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE (1944), a lifetime of needless regret has come to end.

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SS: Was Lugosi friendlier than Karloff? ER: Lugosi was very affable—and he had quite an accent! Well, he was Hungarian, wasn't he? But Karloff was pure English. To me, the English always spoke down to the Americans-you know, to the provinces.

SS: There are a lot of horror stories about working with child actors. What was your experience with Ann Carter in THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE?

ER: Oh, well, she was a perfectly normal child. You wouldn't know she thought about spooky pictures at all! (Laughs) SS: And what about Julia Dean, who played your mother?

ER: She was a famous actress at one time. I didn't know who she was, but Val Lewton knew her very well. She

maybe she wouldn't seem that way. (Laughs) I didn't know her that well. SS: Was the character of Mimi in Lewton's THE SEVENTH VICTIM supposed to be a streetwalker?

ER: She might have been. She had tuberculosis. She knew she was dying and she was going to go out and enjoy herself for the last time.

SS: You worked with such Lewton directors as Jacques Tourneur, Robert Wise, Mark Robson .

ER: Well, Mark and Bob had both been working in the cutting room and Val Lewton took them out of there. Now, Tourneur, he was a very good director.

SS: On THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEO-PLE, you started with Gunther von Fritsch and then Robert Wise took over.

Continued on page 81



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VAL LEWTON

Continued from page 61

Aiken's classic Silent Snow, Secret Snow (1934). This causes much consternation on the part of her parents, who, par for the course in the Lewtonian universe, turn to psychiatry (this from schoolteacher Miss Callahan, played by Eve March) in the face of the supernatural.

Irena watches over Amy in the manner of a guardian angel, particularly after a yarn-spinning old actress, Julia Farren (Julia Dean), frightens the dickens out of the child recounting the legend of the Headless Horseman. (CURSE is set in New York's Tarrytown, otherwise known as Sleepy Hollow, the setting of Washington Irving's 1820 tale.)

Julia takes a grandmotherly interest in Amy despite the fact that she has an adult daughter of her own, Barbara (Elizabeth Russell). Barbara is clearly

the victim of lifelong neglect, which has sparked feelings of insane jealousy in her mind. ("That little girl who comes here-she mustn't ever come to see you again. If that child comes here, if I find her trying to steal your love from me-I'll kill her!") Mrs. Farren tries to hide Amy in the sprawling house, fearful of the unhinged Barbara. Although Amy emerges unscathed, the effort costs the elderly woman her life. "You did it. You stole her love! You thief!" hisses her embittered daughter to the child-and yet, these two have more in common than they realize. Like Amy, Barbara suffers a parent who doesn't love or understand her. This lack of parental acceptance finds a mirror image in the relationship between Amy and Oliver, the latter increasingly cold and distant as it dawns on him that Amy's vivid imagina-

tion reminds him of his late, doomed wife. Simply put, the despairing Barbara Farren is potentially a

grown-up Amy.

The question of whether or not Irena is a mere figment of Amy's imagination is never answered; as with the best fairy tales, CURSE lends itself to speculation and multiple interpretations as individualistic as the viewer himself. But should one choose to see the real Irena at work here, it would be an indication that the misery and calamitous state of mind that she experienced in earthly life have been annulled by her entry into the afterlife and, more importantly, her deep bond with Amy. Maybe there's hope in the Lewtonian universe after all.

Seen in this light, the sensationalist title—imposed on Lewton by the studio, as were the titles of all his films—is more apt, for the Curse of the Cat People has been broken by the innocence and purity of one child's belief.

"All my life I've had a dreadful fear of premature burial. I waken sometimes screaming with nightmares in which I see myself buried alive, waking to find myself entombed, without air, stifling and no escape . . ."

-Mrs. St. Aubyn (Katherine Emery), ISLE OF THE DEAD Lewton took a momentary break from horror in the wake of CURSE, producing the juvenile delinquent exposé YOUTH RUNS WILD (1944) and the costume drama MADEMOISELLE FIFI (1944)—but it was back to bloody brass tacks with ISLE OF THE DEAD (1945), directed by Mark Robson. Lewton and screenwriters Ardel Wray and Josef Mischel took their inspiration from a painting by the spiritualist artist Arnold Bocklin, whose vision of an island with foreboding, jet-black spires so obsessed him that he would eventually produce five variations on it.

ISLE introduces us to the morose, dedicated General Nicholas Pherides (Boris Karloff), who boats with reporter Oliver Davis (Mark Cramer) to a burial island to visit the grave of his wife. Finding the grave desecrated and with one of the island visitors (Skelton Knaggs) pronounced dead of the plague, Pherides and Dr. Drossos (Ernst Deutsch) quarantine the tiny body

of land.

Pherides, after many years as a professional soldier, has been hardened by experience. He's grown up in the Greek countryside, reared on the ghastly folklore of the "vorvolaka"or vampire. A stern man of the world, he's put such childish notions behind him-or so he thinks. Another of the island's unwilling guests, Mary St. Aubyn (Kathleen Emery), is a catatonic morbidly obsessed with premature burial. (Unfortunately, the only two people aware of this-Dr. Drossos and her husband, played by Alan Napierprecede her to the grave.) When Mrs. St Aubyn "dies," a servant, Kyra (Helene Thimig), tries to convince Pherides that the dead woman's companion, Thea (Ellen Drew), is a vorvolaka and responsible.

As we discover in an alltime high of screen horror, Mrs.

St. Aubyn is merely in a coma. She awakens within her coffin; we hear her fingernails scratching against the wooden lid and her agonized screams as the ultimate in personal horror is realized. Like many Lewton characters, her powerlessness to rise above despair seals her fate—though in her case, the inability is definitely born of a physical, not mental, disability.

General Pherides' fragile veneer of rationality is shattered as the unhinged Mrs. St. Aubyn stalks the island with homicidal intent. In one of his finest and most underrated performances, Karloff delineates the tragic destiny of those who surrender to superstition

and despair.

"Gray, I must be rid of you. You've become a cancer, a malignant, evil cancer, rotting my mind. There's only one cure—I must cut you out . . ."
—Dr. Toddy MacFarlane (Henry Daniell),
THE BODY SNATCHER

Lewton's brilliance was on full display with his next project, THE BODY SNATCHER (1945). Taking advantage of newly-signed star Boris Karloff and source material from Robert Louis Stevenson, Lewton (also acting as cowriter under the name Carlos Keith) crafted what

Ah, woe! Ah, me! Shame and sorrow for the family. -I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE

icknamed the Sultan of Shock by the RKO alliterati during the period in which he produced such enduring horror classics as CAT PEOPLE (1942), I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE (1943), and THE BODY SNATCHER (1945), Val Lewton's formula for success demanded subtlety-no werewolves or mummies or mad ghouls running amuck on a backlot Europe. As a result, the Shocks over which he was Sultan-the terrors lurking in the shadows of the mind-were all the more potent for

their unexpectedness.

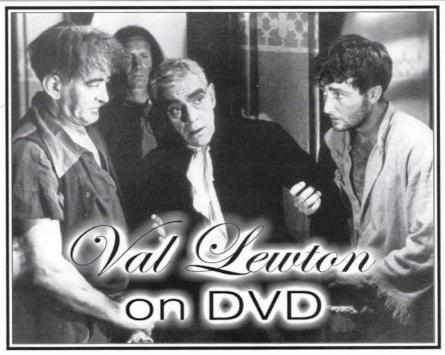
With THE VAL LEWTON COLLEC-TION (Warner Home Video, \$59.92), a DVD box set offering all nine Lewton fright films-the aforementioned trio, THE LEOPARD MAN, THE SEVENTH VICTIM, and THE GHOST SHIP (all 1943); THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEO-PLE (1944); ISLE OF THE DEAD (1945); and BEDLAM (1946)—plus the new documentary SHADOWS IN THE DARK: THE VAL LEWTON LEGACY, Warner Bros. provides a shock of its own. It's the realization that the studio has done precious little to restore these vital films to the pristine condition they so richly deserve.

ISLE OF THE DEAD is a case in point. Set in Greece, the story concerns a disparate group of natives and travelers quarantined on an island while they wait for a hot wind to burn away plague-carrying fleas. Unfortunately, the print is so often inundated with white specks that it looks like they'd have better luck hoping the fleas freeze in a blizzard.

I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE's image is sometimes jumpy. (The audience is supposed to jump, Warners—not the <u>movie</u>.) THE SEV-ENTH VICTIM is a trifle too dark. Scratches-some minor, some major-appear throughout the set.

This isn't nit- (or even flea-) picking. Imagine buying a shiny new car and getting instead a used model, its finish badly scratched, its engine sputtering. Imagine buying splintered woodwork. Imagine buying anything low quality and being expected to like it-and yet that's repeatedly expected of film lovers. Even CAT PEOPLE—which offers the best print quality in the setmerits better treatment than it receives. It is, after all, one of the greatest horror films of all time.

The special features offer a mixed bag. SHADOWS IN THE DARK: THE VAL LEWTON LEGACY is a fine documentary, made with care, affection, and an impressive array of talking heads, including writers Harlan Ellision, Richard Matheson, Ramsey Campbell, and Neil Gaiman; directors Robert Wise (who toiled as



editor and director on the Lewton series), Joe Dante, William Friedkin, George Romero, John Landis, and Guillerno Del Toro: Sara Karloff (whose father, Boris, starred in three of the films); and Lewton's son, Val E. Lewton. James Cromwell narrates the informative, smoothly written script by Steve Haberman and Constantine Nasr.

The audio commentaries are a hit or miss affair. Film historians Kim Newman and Steve Iones are entertainingly chatty on the subject of I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE. William Friedkin, disappointingly, is dull and uninvolv-

ing on THE LEOPARD MAN.

Typically, Tom Weaver's BEDLAM commentary irritates as much as it informs. Weaver's research skills are impressive. Librarians must love him. Unfortunately, Weaver's never satisfied with simply spouting facts; he must let us know when he learned the facts, why he learned the facts, and where he learned the facts. (He's fond of reminding listeners that he's done "his homework.") Not only must he recount actor Robert Clarke's reminiscences of BEDLAM, but he must note that he, Weaver, helped Clarke write a book. For Weaver, a film is never quite as important as Weaver.

Weaver acolyte Greg Mank litters his CAT commentaries with facts, too, but they only hint at the treasure Warner Bros. <u>could</u> have provided. According to writer/director Roy Frumkes:

When the Val Lewton boxed DVD set was announced by Warner Bros., I called George Feltenstein's office and left a message that I had in my possession many taped interviews with Simone Simon. No one returned my call. A month or so later, I had another thought, and called Greg Mank, a

former writer for Films in Review (of which I am the editor), who I had hooked up with Simone several years ago for a book he was writing for McFarland. I suggested that if he still had his taped call with her, he might try submitting it to Warner Bros. for their DVD. Since she had intimidated him during their talk, he suspected that he hadn't saved the tape-but apparently he had, and apparently he got more of a response from Warner Bros. than I did, because excerpts from his interview are on the disc.

The best commentaries are provided by Steve Haberman for THE SEVENTH VICTIM and THE BODY SNATCHER. (On the latter he follows Robert Wise, whose track was originally recorded for laserdisc.) Haberman risks the Revolt of the Horror Fans by detailing the gay subtext in Lewton's work, outing VICTIM's Esther Redi (Mary Newton), Mildred Gilchrist (Eve March), and Frances Fallon (Isabel Jewell). That anyone could question this interpretation will surprise those unfamiliar with the homophobia nibbling at the core of horror fandombut then, they've probably never heard fanboys insist there's absolutely no gay subtext in THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY (1945).

Haberman is, in fact, the unsung hero of THE VAL LEWTON COLLEC-TION. Not only is he one of the architects of a documentary rivaling the best work by David J. Skal for the Universal Horrors of the thirties, forties, and fifties, but he knows how to combine production details with analysis in his commentaries,



Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi met onscreen for the last time in THE BODY SNATCHER (1945), but Lugosi's was only a minor role. Karloff's chief antagonist in the film was played by Henry Daniell.

ROBERT WISE

Continued from page 63

thought of this, because I hadn't been directing that long, but when we got to going into the look of the film and the costumes and the characters, he said, "Let's get some Daumier prints out." We got the ideas for the costumes, for the look of the characters, all from Daumier.

SS: Most producers would have just pulled what they had from stock.

RW: He would stretch it. He had a great facility, Val Lewton; all of his small budget films had a marvelous look about them. And the production values-he would look around the studio and see what sets were left standing. It used to be in the studios-and maybe it still is, today-that, if you had a big interior of a house, for instance, they'd keep that as a standing set. Different films would come in and use it, changing it, repainting it-Val would always watch for those things. One of the films he made is called GHOST SHIP. Well, there had been a bigger picture, kind of a medium-budget picture made about a freighter. They had a big set of the boat, the decks, the cabins—and Val walked by one day and saw us sitting there. He said, "Hey, that's a good part of production," and cooked up the idea of THE **GHOST SHIP!**

SS: Two of the best performances in CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE were those of Julia Dean and Elizabeth Russell.

RW: Oh, yes! Weren't they marvelous together? There was something quite offbeat about that relationship—it was very interesting. I don't know whether Lewton quite knew what he had.

SS: Naturally, we have to ask you about two other actors of some note: Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi. They were in THE BODY SNATCHER together.

RW: I'm going to tell you one thingthe original script didn't have the Lugosi character in it. The studio front office said, "Wouldn't it be great if we could advertise Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi in this film," so they twisted Lewton's arm and Val created that character for Lugosi, the porter at the doctor's place. Karloff was such a marvelous gentleman. He was very well educated-well read, soft spoken, very articulate-not at all like the monster man who appeared on the screen. I got to know Karloff and his family-but Lugosi, I didn't get to know to any extent. Lugosi was not feeling well dur-ing the making of THE BODY SNATCH-ER. Later, I found out he had been on drugs, so maybe he was on drugs when I worked with him. He was offcenter and I had to nurse him through the part, to help him through it. I must say, I give Boris a lot of credit. He was very patient with Lugosi and worked with him and didn't get upset when we had little problems. I don't remember what the problems were, specifically, but I do remember that I had to take it very easy with him.

SS: Lugosi played a scene in which he was actually underwater. That must have been difficult, considering his health.

RW: Yes, that's true, but he was not under there very long.

SS: Karloff gives one of his finest performances in THE BODY SNATCHER.

RW: Boris himself was not well at the time. He was having back problems, but you wouldn't know it—he was there because he wanted this opportu-

nity to show he could act. He never complained, but I could see him wince every once in a while, and he would favor his back when he had a chance. He was so keen about making the film. He felt this would be a good chance, because of the nature of the story and the marvelous scenes he had with Henry Daniell, who was such a marvelous character actor. Boris recognized that this would be his opportunity to show that he could hold his own as an actor. He didn't just need to be the monster man to be in films and be successful.

SS: Karloff's character, Gray, is a murderous villain, but he also does a lot of good. He's the conscience of Dr. MacFarlane, Henry Daniell's character.

RW: There were so many levels to it. That was one of the things that intrigued me most about THE BODY SNATCHER. SS: Henry Daniell was sort of a cold fish in his film roles. Was he really like that?

RW: Yes, a little bit. I got to know Boris much better, and felt closer to him than I did to Henry. Sometimes actors will keep an attitude and a feeling in order to keep in character, you know? Maybe Henry was like that. I don't know that I ever saw Henry away from the studio. I don't know that I ever met his wife or that we went out together. I did that with Boris and his wife, but Henry was a bit standoffish—which was just right for the character.

SS: One of the most famous scenes in THE BODY SNATCHER is the murder of the blind street singer, which happens entirely off-camera.

RW: Oh, yes, yes—with the horse and carriage going down through the alley in the darkness and all that. Val Lewton's theory was that the greatest fear that people have is fear of the unknown. "What's that in the shadows? Do you see that in the shadows? What's that noise? Do you hear that noise?" That's what he played on a lot—suggestion, like the sequence you mentioned, with the singer on the way into the dark and the horse and carriage following her, and her voice suddenly stopping. That was Lewton's idea, by the way.

SS: When we see the girl's body later, we hear a brief echo of the song she was singing. Did you work closely with the composer, Roy Webb?

RW: Roy Webb was under contract to our unit. Max Steiner was actually the head of the RKO music department, but Roy did the smaller pictures. He worked with the producer and myself.

SS: The final scene—the struggling with the dead body in the runaway carriage—is one of the most famous in horror films.

RW: That was difficult to do, to get it just right. Timing was very important. What you do with those scenes is you make dry runs on them, try to get all the camera angles worked out and the action worked out. Then it's pretty well set before you actually put the effects in, like the rain and such. I imag-

ROBERT WISE

Continued from page 66 ine we did it in just a few takes, but we rehearsed it pretty thoroughly.

SS: Ann Carter was so wonderful in THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE. It's surprising that you didn't use her as the little girl in THE BODY SNATCHERS.

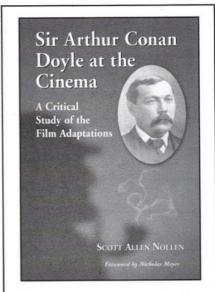
RW: Yes, wasn't she darling? I don't remember, now, why I didn't use her again. I think Ann did maybe one or two other little films, and then nothing ever seemed to happen for her. She was so marvelous, though. She was just lovely in THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE.

SS: After working with Val Lewton, you went on to direct A pictures. Why do you feel Lewton himself couldn't make the jump to

bigger budgets? RW: I don't know. I think it kind of killed him, somehow. It was one of the things that brought on his heart attack. He had such a wonderful thing going for him there at RKO, this little unit called the Snake Pit, because there he made these small, classy pictures and he got national attention. He was written up in the national magazines as somebody who was very exceptional, and he was most happy doing that. But on the Hollywood scene, his agents and some of his friends kept saying, "You've got to move up! Move up to the A pictures." I always sensed that he left RKO reluctantly and went to Para mount. He was signed there to do a big picture, and he did one picture there with an English star [Phyllis Calvert] and it was a big flop. He then left Paramount and was signed at MGM. He did one picture there with Deborah Kerr, which didn't work at all and he left MGM. Someplace along there is when he had his first heart attack. The first didn't get him, but it was just the frustration of what had happened to him; he had been so happy in his little unit at RKO. He had just signed with Stanley Kramer, who had gone over with his company to Universal. Kramer had just signed Lewton to come over to his unit when Val had his second, fatal heart attack. It's too bad. He was just a tremendous

SS: What did you learn about filming suspense and horror movies while working with Val Lewton?

RW: Well, the main thing is that so much can be done through the power of suggestion. I was insistent about doing just that in THE HAUNTING. I've had so many people say to me over the years, "How in the world did you make one of the scariest films I've ever seen, and you didn't show any-thing? How'd you do it?" Well, I did it by suggestion, and that comes from Lewton. It was inherent in the book, but I just played on it as much as I could. That's what I learned from Val Lewton.



"Highly recommended" -The Camden House Journal

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at the Cinema

Scott Allen Nollen \$35 softcover ISBN 0-7864-2124-X 2005 [1996]

LEWTON ON DVD

Continued from page 65

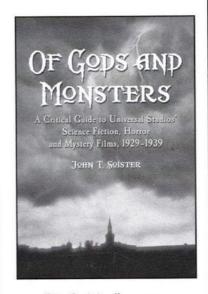
saving them from becoming a dull series of factoids. SHADOWS IN THE DARK is also admirably free of self-styled film historians whose only qualification for the job is that they decided to call themselves film historians.

So what does it boil down to, Scarlet Streeters? It boils down to the usual bottom line-when you're the only game in town, you can get away with anything. When the only choices are owning films of questionable pedigree or not owning them at all, there's nary a film

enthusiast on earth who won't cough up the cash. Warners is hardly the only studio practicing such high-tech (or is it highway?) robbery—Universal has released DRACULA (1931) twice and still hasn't gotten it right-but Warners is widely considered the Rolls Royce of the DVD market. The studio, whose library contains not only Warner Bros. films, but films produced by MGM and RKO, has a virtual lock on some of the greatest movies ever made. That demands a commitment to quality as well as commerce.

-Richard Valley





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Book Engle The Scarlet Street Review of Books

KING KONG
Edgar Wallace, Merian C. Cooper,
and Delos W. Lovelace
Underwood Books, 2005
169 pages—\$9.95
MERIAN C. COOPER'S KING KONG
Joe DeVito and Brad Strickland
St. Martin's Griffin, 2005
224 pages—\$12.95
KONG: KING OF SKULL ISLAND
Joe DeVito and Brad Strickland
DH Press, 2004
160 pages—\$24.95

Do you have a license for that minkey? If you don't, everyone else obviously does. Peter Jackson's KING KONG is coming to movie theaters and publishing houses have jumped on the band-

wagon with a vengeance.

The original story—with variations—is available in at least two versions. Underwood Books' King Kong by Edgar Wallace, Merian C. Cooper, and Delos W. Lovelace was originally published by Grosset & Dunlap in 1932, at a time when novelizations were rare. Adapted from the screenplay and not the finished film (which was released in 1933), the book nevertheless travels along lines similar to the celluloid classic, with a few surprises along the way. Captain Englehorn's ship, for example, is not the SS Venture, but the Wanderer. The paleontology is somewhat shaky. (A tricerotops is "something like a dinosaur.") On the plus side, the creepy crawlies from the film's deleted "spider pit scene"

MERIAN C. COOPER'S

KING

BYJOE DEVITO AND
BRAD STRICKLAND

are all present and accounted for, and Chapter 16 dramatizes Ann Darrow and Jack Driscoll's return to the native village after escaping from Kong, a sequence entirely missing from the movie. The narrative, penned in the best pulp tradition, is irresistible:

"Blinking up at the packed wall, its vast mouth roared defiance, its black, furred hands drummed a black, furred breast in challenge. In the full glare of the torches it hesitated, stopped and as though reading the meaning of the thousand hands which gestured from the rampart, turned and looked down at the altar, and at Ann. It did not look up at Ann upon her pedestal. It looked down . . ."

Additionally, the Underwood edition features four stunning illustrations by Jon Foster, Dave Stevens, Ken

Steacy, and Frank Frazetta.

Joe DeVito and Brad Strickland's version, titled Merian C. Cooper's King Kong, covers the same ground (with very big steps), keeping the Wanderer, the spider pit, and the escape sequence. The triceratops, however, is now officially a dinosaur, though he's changed the spelling of his name. The major alteration comes in furnishing showman Carl Denham with an offstage wife and son, the better to set up DeVito and Strickland's sequel. DeVito provides a color cover illustration and some black-and-white interior drawings, but it's all a warm-up for Kong: King of Skull Island.

In his introduction to Kong: King of Skull Island, stop-motion master Ray Harryhausen writes: "Joe De-Vito's original story and artistic conceptions have gone deeper into the history and background of the adventure's hero, Carl Denham. It was a concept I am sure was never anticipated by Mr. Cooper." Or by anyone who ever saw THE SON OF KONG in 1933. While this combined prequel and sequel to KING KONG is beautifully illustrated, the story robs Skull Island of all its magic by explaining far too much. To paraphrase a line from another fantasy film of the thirties, "Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain—even if he's a gorilla."

—Drew Sullivan

REWIND

Bruce Kimmel

McFarland & Co., 2004

Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640

257 pages—\$39.95

Bruce Kimmel has written his new novel, Rewind, with a laptop dipped

in venom. The showbiz savvy story is the sort of work one might expect if the late literary master of suspense Cornell Woolrich (creator of "Rear Window," The Bride Wore Black, and I Married a Dead Man) had penned a column for Daily Variety or The Hollywood Reporter. Rewind is pure fiction, though—a happy happenstance, since any living, breathing person who found himself within its pages might drop on the spot and spend the next several years spinning in his grave.

several years spinning in his grave. Like ALL ABOUT EVE (1950), Rewind's story is told from the unique viewpoints of several characters. Unlike ALL ABOUT EVE, several of the characters are, by the time they reach the conclusion of their individual reminiscences, no longer among the living. (Paging Joe Gillis from that other 1950 showbiz saga, SUNSET BLVD.) The cast includes Jonathan Goldman, seventies one-hit wonder turned acclaimed record producer; Brian Levitt, his cute gay assistant at Twyckham Island, Goldman's record label; Deborah and Dick Bowman, Twyckham's racist, homophobic financial angels from hell; Bob Noone, a backstabber who aspires to Goldman's producership but hasn't nearly enough talent to pull it off; Paula Finkel, the Twyckham secretary who rarely sinks to the level of doing any actual work; Marty Alvino, the engineer on Goldman's recordings with whom Goldman has had heated disagreements in the past; Dan Rolson, Goldman's best pal; Emily Brennerman, Goldman's beautiful best girl; and cybergeek Gary Johnson, who creates a website tribute to Goldman after the producer is forced out of his own company and commits a fiery suicide.

Who lives? Who dies? And when, where, and why? That's only half the fun, the other half being a real insider's look at the flip side of the record business. Not since Betty Hutton belted out "Murder, He Said" has a musical body count been as irresist-

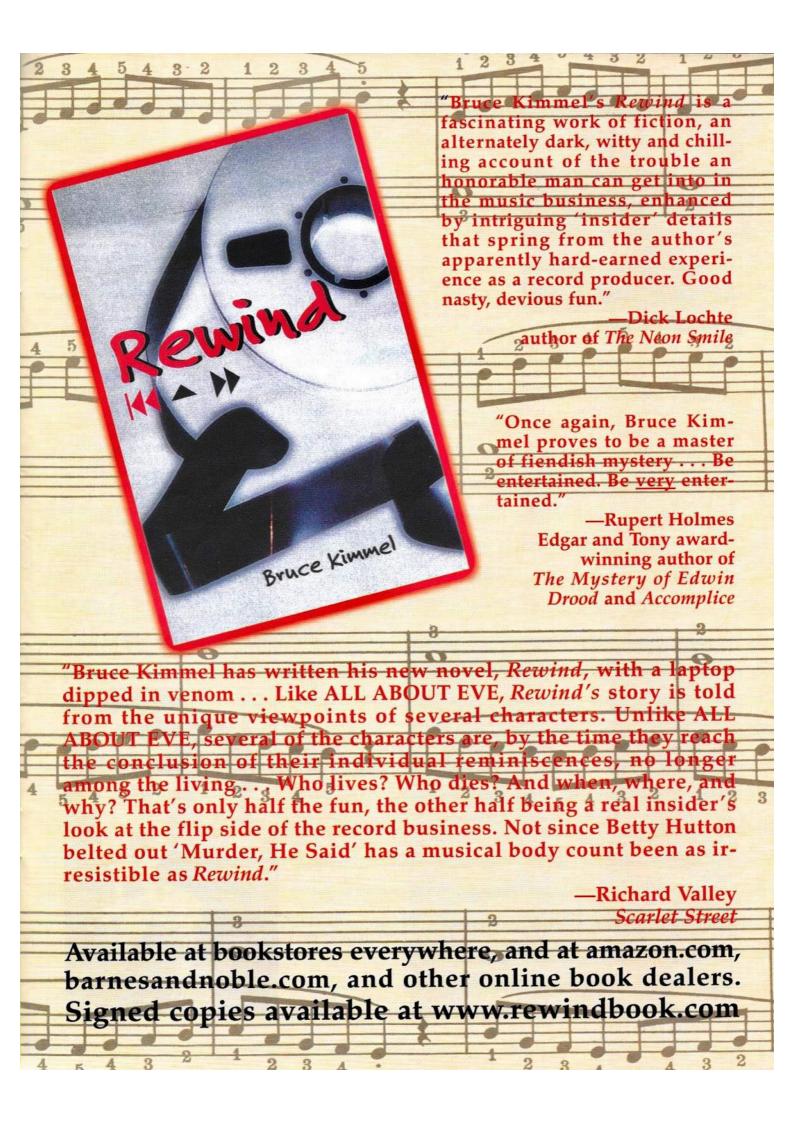
ible as Rewind.

—Richard Valley

BEATING THE DEVIL: THE MAKING OF NIGHT OF THE DEMON

ter-in NIGHT OF THE DEMON (aka

Tony Earnshaw
Tomahawk Press, 2005
127 pages—\$25.00
For many years debate has raged over whether the fire demon ought to have been shown—or was intended from the start to be shown, for that mat-





CURSE OF THE DEMON, 1957). Tony Earnshaw in Beating the Devil: The Making of Night of the Demon moves beyond the speculation that has informed most writing on the matter so far. The demonic controversy isn't the entire point of Earnshaw's book, but it is an overriding one and Earnshaw can lay claim to having settled as much as possible what director Jacques Tourneur knew and when he knew it by examining the various permutations of the script and interviewing all surviving participants.

Earnshaw's book, possibly by accident, demonstrates why film writing is moving more and more into the area of analysis and deconstruction despite protestations from some corners. Nearly 50 years after its making, few of the people involved in DEMON are still alive to be interviewed—and those who survive sometimes have conflicting accounts, hazy memories, or axes to grind. The book is on solid ground through the preproduction phase for which there exists documentation. It is less satisfactory in detailing the actual filming, where Earnshaw must rely more on published reminiscences and interviews with those still living. Things really get muddled detailing the post-production sessions (there were two) that added the demon effects. Perhaps getting a coherent account isn't possible—the effects sessions were hasty affairs, with teams assembled from whoever in the industry was available. According to one of the technicians, the bone of contention between Tourneur and producer Hal E. Chester was not over whether or not to show the demon, but over doing the effects properly rather than on the cheap. If one believes this account, then Tourneur was present when the effects were shot.

Conversely the chapter entitled "Analysis" is excellent though brief and, again, much devoted to the demon question. One can't quite shake the impression that Earnshaw has expanded a monograph on that single aspect of the film into a book, an impression strengthened by the inclusion of a detailed description of the film (more than twice the length of the analysis) and because the text occupies less than two-thirds of the book's length.

There are a plentitude of photographs, luxurious paper, and an excellent biographical "Introduction" on M. R. James

by Christopher Frayling.

Beating the Devil: The Making of Night of the Demon may be a flawed book, but it's also an essential one.

–Harry H. Long

LIVING DANGEROUSLY: THE ADVENTURES OF MERIAN C. COOPER Mark Cotta Vaz Villard, 2005

496 pages-\$26.95 Merian C. Cooper did it all. He was a pioneer documentarian and director during film's silent era, and became a major Hollywood producer during the sound era. He was a commercial aviation pioneer, and a daredevil pilot. He fought in two World Wars. He was taken as a prisoner of war during the first one, and escaped his captors. He hobnobbed with foreign kings. He travelled the world and was amongst the first white men to visit some of the world's most exotic corners. He was great friends with fellow pioneer Ernest B. Schoedesack.

Oh, and by the way—he also created King Kong.

There's not a whole lot of new information on the making of KING KONG (1933) in Mark Cotta Vaz's Living Dangerously: The Adventures of Merian C. Cooper, but since this book is about the man and not the movie, it's perfectly acceptable. Other writers have covered KONG in detail, while giving Cooper's other work short shrift. Living Dangerously rights the balance. It's here that the book shines; such Cooper films (most with Schoedesack) as GRASS (1925), CHANG (1927), THE MOST DAN-GEROUS GAME (1932), and SHE (1935) are well-covered, and appreciated.

Coop" emerges as a remarkable, passionate, and fascinating man, not dissimilar to his onscreen doppelganger, Carl Denham. In fact, the man made Denham look like a piker. Coop called his movies, "Distant, Difficult, and Dangerous"-and so was his life story. His exploits-and this book-make for a good, old-fashioned, ripping yarn. It's the kind of biography H. Rider Haggard or Edgar Rice Burroughs would write.

With a big-budget remake of KING KONG on the way, it's inevitable that a new wave of Kongmania will get the world's attention, and that some people will try to cash in on it with quick, bogus collectibles and books that'll no doubt gather dust and low bids on eBay. This isn't one of them. It's a well-researched, well-written, and above all, entertaining book that will keep you up late. It certainly did that for me.

-Robin Anderson

KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER CHRONICLES Edited by Joe Gentile Moonstone, 2005 320 pages-\$18.95

It's a dream come true—or rather a delicious nightmare! Kolchak is back in print, not just as a comic book-though the comic book is certainly good, scary fun-but between the covers of an actual book!

Reporter Carl Kolchak was created by Jeff Rice for a novel called The Kolchak Papers. (It was published as The Night Stalker in 1973). Darren McGavin immortalized him in the ABC TV movies THE NIGHT STALKER (1972) and THE NIGHT STRANGLER (1973). The TV series KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER (1974) followed. In 1994, Mark Dawidziak authored the first Kolchak novel in two decades: Grave Secrets. Then came the comic and the new TV show, which premiered this past September.

And finally-Kolchak: The Night Stalk-

er Chronicles!

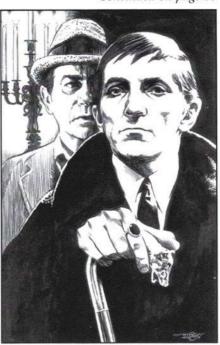
Published by Moonstone, the Chronicles gathers together writers from the worlds of fiction, film, comics, and television, and invites them to explore the supernatural world of one Carl Kolchak in 26 stories.

Item: The senseless murder of 18year-old Robert Juan Alvarez has outraged Los Angeles. The boy was destined for greatness-voted most likely to succeed in high school, accepted at UCLA, eyeing the White House. What might he have accomplished had he lived? In P. N. Elrod's unnerving "The Night Stalker," Kolchak finds out.

Item: "They say that Rock and Roll will never die. Well, I've got news for them, sometimes it dies and comes back." In search of a missing girl, Kolchak investigates a band appropriately called D-Composed in James W. Bates' "The Ungrateful Dead.'

Item: A reporter should always protect his source, even when that source is linked to a gruesome series of murders, the victims all young male prostitutes found nude, strangled, and partially devoured in cemeteries across the city. In "The Source," one of the

Continued on page 80



OF RHUBARBS AND ORANGES

Continued from page 50

THE COMEDY OF TERRORS (1964) united four of the giants of horror and mystery cinema—Karloff, Price, Lorre, and Rathbone, all of whom were fine comedians as well. The film was written by Richard Matheson and directed by Jacques Tourneur—who, appropriately, had

helmed CAT PEOPLE (1942).

Waldo Trumbull (Price) is an unscrupulous undertaker experiencing hard times. As there aren't enough funerals taking place, Waldo, with the help of escaped convict Felix Gillie (Lorre), plots to scare up some business via direct action. He trains his lethal attention on his landlord, the insufferable John F. Black, Esquire (Rathbone), who repeatedly refuses to go quietly. The rest of the household consists of Waldo's long-suffering wife, Amaryllis (Joyce Jameson), who has operatic aspirations, and her dear, decrepit old father, Amos Hinchley (Karloff contributing his last great comedic performance). As the humans indulge in murderous slapstick, the household cat, Cleopatra, complements the action. (Watch Cleopatra cover her ears at Amaryllis' truly awful singing.)

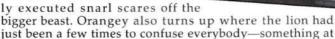
Cleopatra is played by Orangey, billed under the "Rhubarb" alias. Orangey, who performs behind the end titles as though he were Candy Johnson in an AIP Beach Party flick, appears fit in the film, not like something the cat dragged in, although publicity noted that the fellow was 18 in 1964, the equivalent of 126 in human years. It was quite a high note for the old trooper—the puss is billed above both "special guest star" Joe E. Brown and

Rathbone.

Tony Randall starred as Daniel Potter, an animal psychologist presently working with a lion in the madcap FLUFFY (1965). Dr. Potter is perfectly rational, and his lion is tame and lovable—but, darn, everyone else goes into a panic whenever the beast turns up. When Daniel (of the proper Biblical name) and his subject check into a posh hotel and Fluffy wanders off, things get silly, with scientists, the police, a big game hunter, and a drunk get

Orangey (pictured with Millie Perkins) contributed to one of the most dramatic moments in THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK (1959).

involved. Zamba—reputedly the centerpiece of MGM
studios' own famous logo—
plays the lion. The cast includes Shirley Jones, Dick
Sargent, Jim Backus, Frank
Faylen, Whit Bissell, and a
certain unnamed orange
cat. In one fine scene, Orangey enters a room to
find Fluffy slurping at his
own bowl of milk. A nice-



which cats are very adept.

This appears to be the last film in his <u>cat</u>alogue. Orangey's total film and television appearances eventually numbered, we are told, over 500. In 1967, Frank Inn set up a cat stunt for a MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE episode. By this time, Orangey's doubles may have been carrying more of the burden: discussion of this particular effort almost describes the cat as if it were a consortium. Perhaps a cat <u>can</u> outwit Curiosity, but not Chronos; Father Time can be fooled for just so long. Cats typically live 10 to 12 years, with notable geezers who have approached 30. As he would be 59 today, we may safely though sadly assume that Orangey has indeed moved on to the great Ball of Yarn in the Heavens, probably some time before 1970. Frank Inn (1916-2002) has checked out, and can no longer enlighten us.

Orangey may be gone, but he has a credible claim to being the greatest nonhuman living thing in Hollywood history. Sip a screwdriver in his honor some time.



Continued from page 49

as Mama's three sisters. Best of all is Oscar Homolka in an Oscar-nominated performance as bombastic Uncle Chris.

Composer Leonard Bernstein could have used some of Orangey's skills in stalking Hollywood credits. When the motion-picture version of Bernstein's 1944 Broadway musical ON THE TOWN hit screens in 1949, it was minus most of his lilting melodies. In 1953, Bernstein reteamed with lyricists Betty Comden and Adolph Green for WONDERFUL TOWN, based on the 1940 play MY SISTER EILEEN by Joseph A. Fields and Jerome Chodorov. When Columbia Pictures, which had filmed the play in 1942 and held the rights, made a musical version in 1955, they reverted to the title MY SISTER EILEEN (Columbia Tristar Home Entertainment, \$19.94) and skipped the Broadway score entirely.

The story, concerning two sisters from Ohio who move to New York's Greenwich Village in pursuit of fame and fortune, remains a delight. Betty Garrett is comic perfection as acerbic older sister Ruth Sherwood. (Shirley Booth had originated the role on stage, after which Rosalind Russell played it in the first film version, on the stage in WONDERFUL TOWN, and on television in 1958.) Janet Leigh lends considerable charm and beauty to the role of Eileen. The sisters' suitors are played by Jack Lemmon, Tommy Rall, and Bob Fosse (the last also serving as the film's choreographer).

Continued on page 75



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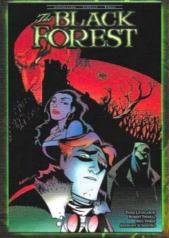


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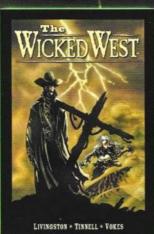


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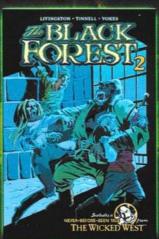
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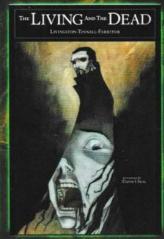
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VAL LEWTON

Continued from page 64

remains a yardstick of superbly literary and sophisticated horror.

Set in the Edinburgh of 1831, THE BODY SNATCHER introduces us to Dr. "Toddy" MacFarlane (Henry Daniell), a prominent surgeon training a young intern, Donald Fettes (Russell Wade). In order to procure necessary "raw material" for experimentation, MacFarlane is forced to employ the grave-robbing services of the seemingly kind cabman, Gray (Karloff). MacFarlane faces his greatest professional challenge when he's confronted with the young, paralyzed Georgina (Sharyn Moffett). The cold medical man-and who could be colder than Henry

Daniell-greets the case with detached disinterest, until the prodding of Fettes and vague hints from Gray of outstanding debts owed sway him to the contrary. The operation is, at first glance, successful and without incident, but Georgina fails to walk. MacFarlane despairs-not for the child's sake, but over his own lack of medical aptitude-with Gray while.

egging him on all the Meanwhile, Joseph (Bela Lugosi), MacFarlane's greedy orderly, has caught wind of the shady transactions between his employer and Gray. An attempt to extort money from the cabman ends with Gray singing a charming ditty about the notorious graverobbers Burke and Hare and demonstrating their murderous technique when fresh bodies grew scarce. Joseph becomes the latest corpse delivered into young Fettes' care.

MacFarlane is eventually pushed over the edge by Gray's goading and kills him-only to be guiltily haunted by the man's corpse in a frightening nighttime coach ride. When Fettes examines the body that so frightened his master, it is, of course, merely the woman that he and MacFarlane had previously disinterred. We are reminded of Gray's earlier taunt to his old friend Toddy-"You'll never be rid of me."

THE BODY SNATCHER finds Lewton and director Robert Wise at the height of their powers; it is a flawlessly acted, intelligently realized tale, seasoned with a deliciously understated vein of graveyard humor. Mac-Farlane, by virtue of his utter belief that Gray will haunt him forever-a belief that flies in the face of the very science that is the basis of his life's work-is yet another Lewton character marked for an unpleasant, inescapable end. Gray merely provides the impetus; it is Toddy who fulfills his own destiny.

"What I know means nothing! I've had to fawn and toady and make a mock of myself till all I could hear was the world laughing at me. But once I had what I wanted-this-my place here . . . -Master Sims (Boris Karloff), BEDLAM

Just as a work of fine art inspired ISLE OF THE DEAD, so does BEDLAM (1946) draw from a famous illustration by William Hogarth, the last in his series titled "The Rake's Progress," which depicts a young "rake's' gradual decline into decadence and final madness at the notorious St. Mary of Bethlehem asylum.

Continued on page 78



LEFT: The unlikely savior of Third Officer Tom Merriam (Russell Wade) in THE GHOST SHIP (1943) was Finn the Mute, played by perennial screen villain mate agrees with me. It's hot. I like it Skelton Knaggs. RIGHT: Wade poses for a beefcake publicity photo. Not everyone hot. And it was getting crowded up in the 1940s hung Betty Grable on the wall. BELOW LEFT AND RIGHT: In THE there. Val Lewton was gone. The peo-BODY SNATCHER (1945), Donald Fettes (Wade) is so taken with little ple that you have confidence in, Georgina Marsh (Sharyn Moffett)—and Georgina's mother (Rita Corday)—that he they leave. The studio head left. He asks cabman John Gray (Boris Karloff) to persuade Dr. McFarlane (Henry died. You know, things change. I Daniell, not shown) to operate.

RUSSELL WADE

Continued from page 37

wood studios] were smart in putting the two of them together, because they played well. The chemistry worked! SS: Oh, you'll get no argument there. THE GHOST SHIP was another splendid Val Lewton production.

RW: With Richard Dix. Well, it was held up for a long time. It never got a release. It finally got a release here in New York a year or so ago, and it got great reviews, and it took in x-number of dollars. But it was held up for a long time-like damn near 50 years!

SS: Well, it was released back in 1943, but there was a lawsuit filed against it. A writer claimed he submitted a script that was similar to the story-and apparently, RKO fought it in court and lost. The film was kept in RKO's vaults for all these years. It's a terrific movie.

RW: Well, that's good. I'm glad you enjoyed it. Val Lewton was a terrific guy, and I had two good directors. Robert Wise was a great director, and Mark

Robson was great, too. I had the bestfor a B picture!

SS: They don't look like B pictures-especially THE BODY SNATCHER. You really get the feeling that you're in 19th-century Scotland-the clothes and the sets, everything was just great. And in addition to Karloff and Lugosi in the cast, there was Henry Daniell .

RW: "Oh, he was a terrific actor! He was a hell of an actor! He'd worked with Garbo and did some fine things in pictures. SS: He had a reputation for being something of a cold fish.

RW: He was cold! He was very cold. If

you didn't know your lines-he was all business! I tried to hold my own. I don't know whether I did or not. SS: Why did you leave the picture business?

RW: I was ill. I came to the desert to get well. The studio sent me down here to Floyd Odlum's ranch. He owned RKO. There was nothing down here, and I liked it very much. I thought this was a place that was going to grow, and I wanted to be a part of it. So I moved down to Indian Wells, and I went back to



Hollywood twice to make two movies. And I came back to Indian Wells, and I've been here ever since.

SS: No regrets? RW: No. Hell no! My health is more important than anything! The clithought I would be better off down here.

SS: Was that about the time that Howard Hughes took over RKO?

RW: He took over after that. Shortly after that. As a matter of fact, I went over to Howard Hughes to make him an offer to buy the studio! I met some people down here-some directors I could never work for, 'cause I could never get in to see them, like William Wyler, and Don Hartman, who was the head of Paramount. I sold them property down here. They got to know me and Wyler offered me a job to go to Rome to be in a picture with—he'd signed a new girl—Audrey Hepburn! I said, "Why don't you buy RKO and make your own pictures?" They lined up Cary Grant and Danny Kaye and a couple of writers, and they sent me in to see Hughes-only I saw him on the Indian reservation in Palm Springs. He said, "Who are they?" And I said, "I'm not at liberty to tell you their names, because they're under contract to different studios. I'll find out later if it's okay and tell you." So, I told Wyler and Hartman, and I said, "Do you want to tell him?" And they said, "Tell him. What the hell. He'll soon know." So Hughes said, "Why won't Hartman work for me?" Hartman said Hughes would call him at two o'clock in the morning-at three o'clock-to tell him to build up Janet Leigh's breasts in the publicity ads! (Laughs) "I can't work like that!" Hughes did what he wanted toyou can't blame him for that!

SS: He did produce some terrific movies. RW: That would have been something if I could have sold that damn studio! (Laughs)

RECOLLECTIONS OF SIMONE

Continued from page 45

imagine, books will also be interactive, so I'll not only have written about Simone, but she'll talk to readers as they browse the book.

I've gotten to know so many of my favorite film personalities over the years, due to my filmmaking and also to my magazine work, that life on that level has been an almost constant joy for me. Still, no film personality has meant more to me as a friend than Simone, since she represented the very beginnings of my passion for cinema and for the horror genre.

Roy Frumkes was the screenwriter and producer of STREET TRASH. He directed DOCUMENT OF THE DEAD, and created the SUBSTITUTE franchise. Recently he produced and coauthored THE SWEET LIFE with James Lorinz and Joan Jett, completed THE MELTDOWN MEMOIRS, a feature doc about the making of STREET TRASH, wrote, directed, and hosted DREAM OF THE DEAD, a TV special for the Independent Film Channel about George Romero and Tom Savini's reunion on LAND OF THE DEAD, and is about to embark on THE DEFINITIVE DOCUMENT OF THE DEAD, a final update for his 27-years-in-progress doc, including another walk-and-talk with George, and interviews with Greg Nicotero, Danny Boyle, etc.

Did You Miss The Curse of the Cat People in Scarlet Street #27? Available in our Back Issue Dept. on Page 9



Continued from page 71

Orangey appears briefly when a dirty dog chases him into the Sherwoods' basement apartment—or does he? MY SISTER EILEEN is a color film, and the cat's certainly orange.

Shirley Booth didn't get to recreate her Broadway success as Ruth Sherwood in Hollywood and, 18 years later, Ruth Gordon wasn't allowed to recreate her 1955 stage triumph as Mrs. Dolly Gallagher Levi in THE MATCH-MAKER for the 1958 film. Instead, Shirley Booth got

THE MATCHMAKER (Paramount Home Video, \$14.99) tells the farcical tale of a meddlesome widow who arranges the marriage of wealthy skinflint Horace Vandergelder (Paul Ford) to—herself. The cast is exemplary: Anthony Perkins and Robert Morse as Vandergelder's clerks, Shirley MacLaine as the milliner Vandergelder thinks he's going to marry, and Wallace Ford as an amiable imbiber.

Is the cat in Vandergelder's office really Orangey? The Internet Movie Database says yes, but the IMDB has been known to make mistakes. We'll go out on a limb

(there's a bird out there) and say yes, it's Orangey.

At the very least on a par with THE TWILIGHT ZONE (1959-64), ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS (1955-62) is the class act of anthology series. Universal Home Video has finally seen fit to release the series to DVD, and Season One is now available for \$39.98. Though



virtually nothing has been done to remaster or spruce up these programs, the set is still a bargain—39 episodes and an informative documentary titled ALFRED HITCH-COCK PRESENTS: A LOOK BACK.

The set includes such classic episodes as "Into Thin Air," based on a true story that inspired both Hitchcock's THE LADY VANISHES (1938) and Terence Fisher's SO LONG AT THE FAIR (1950); "Breakdown," a Hitchcockdirected tale starring Joseph Cotten as a paralysed man who everyone thinks is dead; and "The Case of Mr. Pelham," with Tom Ewell as a poor sap whose life is taken over by a doppleganger. And the casts are a Who's Who of fifties film and television: Vera Miles, Frances (Aunt Bee) Bavier, John Forsythe, Cloris Leachman, Sidney Blackmer, Darren (Carl Kolchak) Mc-Gavin, Alan Napier, Ann (Tante Berthe) Codee, Gene Barry, Beulah Bondi, Peter Lawford, Barry Fitzgerald, Carolyn (Morticia Adams) Jones, Patricia Collinge, Sebastian Cabot, Iris Adrian, Claude Rains, Claire Trevor, Hurd (Dorian Gray) Hatfield, Mildred Natwick, Dabbs Greer, Joanne Woodward, Reta Shaw, Amanda (Miss Kitty) Blake, Patricia Hitchcock-the list goes on and on.

And where's Orangey? Well, who's that sitting on the lap of none other than Lizzie Borden (Carmen Mathews) in "The Older Sister?" There's loose talk of a dead kitten in the basement, but Orangey survives intact till the closing credits. (See the photo on page 71 if you don't believe me.) After that-well, this is Hitchcock, after all!

Coming Soon in Scarlet Street!

Invasion of the Body Snatchers, Lyle Talbot, The Horrors of Gramercy, Kenny Miller, Columbia Horrors, Susan Gordon, Dark Passages: The World of Film Noir, Teenagers From Outer Space, and Much More!





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SIX HOURS TO LIVE (1932) Warner Baxter, Miriam Jordan

SIX HOURS TO LIVE* (1932) Warner Baxter, Miriam Jordan, John Boles, George F. Marion. Baxter is great as an outspoken diplomat who is murdered during an international conference. In a classic '30s lab scene, he is brought back to life by an eccentric scientist. He then has only six hours to live—six hours to find his killer! This is a really great film that all soi-fi and intrigue fans will want for their collection. Our highest recommendation. From 16mm. DVD item #\$253D, VHS item #\$253 RADIO RANCH* (1935, Mascot) Gene Autry, Wheeler Oakman, Betsy Ross, Smiley Burnette. This fun sci-fi serial condensation, which in some ways was bigger than the original serial itself, has never been on DVD before. Gene's gang discovers the weird underground city of Murania. A campy blend of sci-fi and western hijinks. Love those tin can robots. From a top 16mm print. Please note: This title is \$11.95, plus shipping and handling. DVD item #W119D, VHS item #W119 QUATERMASS II* (1955) John Robinson, Monica Grey, Hugh Griffith, John Stone. This is the original 6-part teleseries that was the follow-up to the earlier teleseries, The Ouatermass Experiment (1953). There is something very wrong with a huge chemical factory out in the wilds of rural England. An alien horror is atoot! Great script, great acting, Highly recommended, DVD item #\$254D, VHS item #\$254 MOON WOLF* (1959) Carl Mohner, Ann Savo. A space flight sci-fi adventure. A group of NASA scientists put a wolf through extensive training for a flight into outer space. Our four-legged astronaut is launched into outer space and eventually orbits the moon! When the capsule returns, it lands in Lapland amid snarriing wolves that threaten searchers. Home DVD tem #\$254D, VHS item #\$218 MISTRESS OF THE WORLD* (1960) Martha Hyer, Micheline Presle, Carlos Thompson, Sabu, directed by Wm. Dieterle. A lively sci-fi epic. A scientist's invention creates a huge magnetic pulse that disrupts

misiness of the Worklor (1960) Martha Hyer, Micheline resie, Carlos Thompson, Sabu, directed by Wm. Dieterle. A lively sci-ficio. A scientist's invention creates a huge magnetic pulse that disrupts ectricity over an entire continent. The military applications are already leing considered when the scientist is abducted by crooks. Later, his hughter finds herself having to consort with shady individuals as she less him out. Cool. Color, 16mm, DVD Item #\$25550, VHS Item #\$255

INVASION OF THE NEPTUNE MEN* (1961) Sonny Chiba INVASION OF THE NEPTUNE MEN* (1961) Sonny Chiba, Shinjiro Ebara. No Japanese superhero film may be more ridiculous, yet sol-fi fans seem to flock to the lovable badness of this incredibly inane, awful film. "Space Chief" and an annoying passel of Japanese kids light off awkward aliens from Neptune. This has to be seen to be believed. Good lord. From 16mm. DVD item #8256D, VHS item #8256 PLANET OF BLOOD* (1966) Basil Rathbone, John Saxon, Dennis Hopper, Florence Marly. An expedition to Mars finds a crashed alien space ship. They bring back the only survivor, a green-skinned, glowing-eyed, bloodsucking, female allein who preys on the crewmembers. A grisky, creepy sci-fi horror opus that's an absolute must. From a top color 35mm print. DVD item #\$157D, VHS item #\$157 SO DARLING, SO DEADLY* (1967) Tony Kendall, Brad Harris, Barbara Frey. Two agents come are hired to protect a scientist who has

SO DAKLING, SO DEADLY (1967) Tony Kendall, Brad Harris, Barbara Frey. Two agents come are hired to protect a scientist who has created a death ray with a 300-mile range! The evil Golden Dragon, along with his machinegun and whip-wielding babes, try to steal the power beam for evil purposes. There's an ancient torture chamber (run by the unruly babes) that Tony and Brad end up in! A great '60s spy-scifi movie. Wow! Nice color, 16mm. DVD item #\$257D, VHS item #\$257

BEFORE MIDNIGHT* (1933) Raiph Bellamy, June Collyer, Betty Blythe, Claude Gillingwater. An inspector is summoned to a creepy estate that was the scene of a horrible murder long ago. Legend has it that the owner will die before midnight when the clock stops just before the stroke of 12. A must, 16mm. DVD item #H348D, VHS item #H348

HORROR ISLAND* (1941) Dick Foran, Leo Carrillo, Peggy Moran, Fuzzy Knight, Here's one we all know and love. Foran is the skipper of a charter boat that heads out to a haunted island. Mystery and horror awaits them. Great fun with a haunted castle, secret p. hidden freasure, and a cloaked "phantom" running about. A must b/w horror collectors. 16mm. DVD item #H349D, VHS item #H349

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FRENZY* (1946, aka LATIN QUARTER) Derrick De Marney, Jos Greenwood, Frederick Valk. An unsung British horror masterpiece. An insane sculptor suspects his wife of having an affair. When she disappears, eerie things start happening in his studio. A psychic holds a seance to discover the identity and location of her killer. The revelation searce to discover the identity and location or her killer. The reversible of what really happened is truly one of the scariest scenes in 1940s horror films. This is way cool! Highly recommended. From 16mm. DVD item #H0230, VHS item #H0230, VHS item #H0230, VHS item #H0230, VHS item #H0230.

Ghoulish critters roam the countryside after a voodoo curse is put on a tourist group. Not too bad for a low budget Mexican horror film. One of he most popular of the K. Gordon Murray titles. Some eerie nematography. From 16mm. DVD Item #H125D, VHS Item #H125 CREATURE OF THE WALKING DEAD* (1965) R

Madison, Ann Wells, Katherine Victor. A mad doctor revives a dead man who needs blood to survive. There are some pretty cool scenes here and there, but overall this is a mindless Jerry Warren concoction and therefore, a must. From 16mm. DVD item #H082D, VHS item #H082

CARRY ON SCREAMING* (1966) Kenneth Williams, Fenella Fielding, Harry Corbett, Jim Dale. This is a fine British horror cornedy much in the same vein as the Addams Family. The evil Dr Watt is abducting young ladies and turning them into mannequins to sell to local stores. Fortunately for Dr Watt, a clueless detective from Scotland Yard is put on the case. Hysterical Fielding is a terrific Morticia Addamstype. A must. Color, 35mm. DVD item #H086D, VHS item #H086





TRACK OF THE VAMPIRE* (1966) Wm. Campbell. Sandra TRACK OF THE VAMPIRE* (1966) Wm. Campbell, Sandra Knight, Jonathan Haze. A Roger Corman film about a mad artist who thinks he's reincarnated from a vampire. He dips his victims into molten wax, then paints them. The editing is shaky in spots, but this is a great horror film with a big following. Some nall biting "monster stalking his victims" scenes. From 16mm. VHS item #H167, DVD item #H167D

horror film with a big following. Some nail biting "monster stalking his victims" scenes. From 16mm. VHS item #H167, DVD item #H167D' BLOOD DEMON* (1967 aka TORTURE CHAMBER OF DR. SADISM) Christopher Lee, Karin Dor, Lex Barker, Beheadings, virgins, straps, and corpses. What else do you need to know about this movie? An outrageous film that's a must-see for Chris Lee fans. A great supporting cast. Color, 16mm. DVD item #H667D, VHS item #H667T. THE HOUSE THAT SCREAMED* (1969) Lilli Palmer, John Moulder-Brown, Cristina Galbo, Mary Maude. This creep Euro-thriller is centered in a French boarding school for wayward young women. Palmer is the over-the-top head mistress who runs the joint. Sexual escapades abound within its walls. Then the grifs start vanishing one by one A mysterious killer is loose within the manor's dark corridors. Very intense for its time, this cult favorite is one you won't want to miss. Rated R. Color, scope, 16mm. DVD item #H350D, VHS item #H350. COUNT DRACULA* (1970) Christopher Lee, Herbert Lorn, Klaus Kinski, Soledad Miranda, directed by Jess Franco. This was supposed to be a faithful adaptation of Bram Stoker's novel it's close during the first half, then wanders off during the later portion of the film. Lee is a bit different than in his Hammer films. Kinski is great as a mute Renfield. From a nice 16mm color print. DVD item #H351D, VHS item #H351 THE FEAST OF SATAN* (1971) Krists Nell, Espartaco Santoni, Teresa Gimpers, Julio Pens. A lady arrives at a coastal village where here

THE FEAST OF SATAN* (1971) Krista Nell, Espartaco Santoni, Teresa Gimpera, Julio Pena. A lady arrives at a coastal village where hosister—now missing—has last been seen. The police investigate but she decides to snoop around a little herself. Unknown to her, she has come under the scrutiny of a mad scientist who has sinister plans for her. A series of horrifying events follow in this grandly made Euro-horror film. Color, scope, 16mm. DVD Item #H353D, VYHS Item #H358 for her, A series of horrifying events follow in this grandly made Euro-horror film. Color, scope, 16mm. DVD Item #H353D, VYHS Item #H358 Denergue. In order to inherit a family fortune, heirs must spend the night in a creepy family estate. During the night a mad killer goes wild! We have many great releases this year. This is not one of them. In fact, this movie is so bad it's hysterical. We're talking really pritful stuff here. Recommended for all bad film afficionados and horror completists. Nice color and print, though. 16mm. DVD item #H354D, VHS item #H354 THE DEAD ARE ALIVE* (1972) Alex Cord. Samantha Equar.

color and print, though. 16mm. DVD item #H354D, VHS item #H354
THE DEAD ARE ALIVE* (1972) Alex Cord, Samantha Eggar,
John Marley, Nadja Tiller. An archaeological dig sets out for an ancient
Etruscan burial ground. An ancient tomb is discovered and opened.
Things get weird when they realize that not all the Etruscans buried there
are actually dead. Brrr. A top Euro-chiller that you won't want to miss—
way cool. Color, soope, 16mm. DVD item #H352D, VHS item #H352
FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE* (1973) Peter Cushing, Diana
Dors, Donald Pleasence, David Warner. A terrific anthology horror film
that focuses on an antique dealer (Cushing) and his strange shop. Four
creepy tales follow concerning the fates of customers who tried to cheat
him. Stories include "Gate Crasher" with David Warner, "An Act of
Kindness" with Donald Pleasence, "The Elemental", and "The Door."
Recommended Color, 35mm. DVD item #H355D, VHS item #H355



GODMONSTER OF INDIAN FLATS* (1973) Chris Brooks Stuart Lancaster, E. Kerrigan Prescott, Peggy Brown. The plot is simple A mad doctor creates a monstrous, bloodthirsty mutant sheep that goes berserk near a Wild West town. It emits a horrible phosphorus gas and

A mad doctor creates a monstrous, bloodthirsty mutant sheep that goes berserk near a Wildi West town. It emits a horrible phosphorus gas and is in a generally foul disposition most of the time. Bad movies just don't come much better. Color, 35mm. DVD item #H356D, VHS item #H356 BLACK MAMBA* (1974) John Ashley, Marlene Clark, Eddie Garcia. Ashley is a doctor who treats the citizens of a small Filipino village. He is stunned to discover witchcraft and voodoo being practiced in the 20th century and discovers his fiancée is the target of an evil witch. This rare title is available through an exclusive arrangement from Retromedia and our good pal, Fred Ray. Recommended. Rated R for nudity and violence. Color, 16mm. DVD Item #H357D, VHS Item #H357 DEVIL KISS** (1975) Silvia Solar, Olivier Othot, Jose Nieto, Evelyne

DEVIL KISS* (1975) Silvia Solar, Olivier Othot, Jose Nieto, Evelyne cott. A great Euro-horror thriller about a psychic countess and mad cientist who conduct occult research in the castle of Count Victor. Vickning from the cellar with a buisted dwarf, the two of them re-animate corpse and command it to commit murder for them. Wow. Rated R for

SWORD & SANDAL

PIRATES OF THE COAST* (1960) Lex Barker, Estella Blain, Livion Lorenzon, Liana Orfei. A great, colorful Italian costume epic with Barker as a ship capitaln who is pitted against a crafty pirates. There are some interesting turnabouts, however, with plot twists a-plenty. Beautiful photography. Color, 16mm. DVD item #SS134D, VHS item #SS134

photography. Color, 16mm. DVD item #SS134D, VHS Item #SS134
VENGEANCE OF URSUS* (1962) Samson Burke, Wandisa
Guida, Gianni Rizzo. Ursus goes through a series of thrilling adventures
in this obscure sword and sandal opus. He seeks (and gets) revenge on
his enemies and eventually helps free the citizens of an oppressed
village. Color, from 16mm. DVD item #SS89D, VHS Item #SS89

LION OF ST. MARK* (1963) Gordon Scott, Rik Battaglia, Glanna LION OF S1. MARK* (1963) Gordon Scott, Nik Battagia, Gianni taria Canale. The year is 1820. Usok pirates are terrorizing the Adrialit-oastline. Gordon plays a sword-wielding hero who becomes involved rith a beautiful adventuress in this well made costume spectacle. Now color. Color, from 16mm. DVD Item #SS910, VHS Item #SS91 HERCULES AND THE TYRANTS OF BABYLON* (1964)

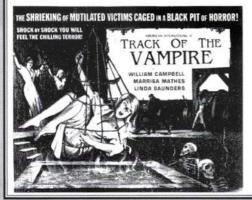
Rock Stevens (Peter Lupus), Helga Line, Mario Petri. A princess is held by Babylonian tyrants who are unaware of her real identity. When she is discovered, they use her as a pawn in a plot against her kingdom. Enter Hercules, who discovers the evil plan, raises an army of slaves, and comes to her aid. Color, 16mm. DVD item #SS92D, VHS item #SS92

comes to ner aid. Color, Telmin. JVD Itelmin 202222, Virol itelmin 30222.

ERIK THE VIKING* (1985) Gordon Mitchell, Gluilano Gemma, Eleonora Bianchi, Elisa Montes. Erik (Mitchell) sails into danger in the New World. He is betrayed by a trusted warrior pal who murders his Greek navigator. He then causes Erik and his Viking pals to be captured

EDGAR & BRYAN WALLACE

THE BLACK ABBOT* (1963) Joachim Fuchsberge Bottscher. A mad criminal is on the loose! Witnesses describe a hooded figure that they have seen disappearing into a rulined tower. The mystery leads to a shirster castle filled with terror. 16mm. DVD item #EW04D, VHS item #EW04



THE RACETRACK MURDERS* (1964) Hansjorg Felmy, Ann myrner, Hans Nielson, Walter Rilba. Mystery at the track! A well-known noroughbred is stain by a rival horse owner. Soon jockeys are being nurdered by a mysterious killer. Scandals, blackmail, and drugs abound this fine Wallace thriller. 16mm. DVD item #EW24D, VHS item #EW24 THE MYSTERIOUS MAGICIAN* (1965) Eddie Arent, Joachim

inchsberger. Though thought by Scotland Yard to be dead, the mad underer known as "The Wizard", is alive, well, and spreading new terror roughout London. 16mm DVD Item #EW09D, VHS Item #EW09 THE SINISTER MONK" (1965) Karin Dor, Siegfried Lowitz,

Harald Leipnitz, lise Steppat. The setting is a girls' school where a hooded killer, "the Monk," lashes his victims to death with a whip. Scotland Yard tries to track him down, but more slayings occur before they can find the killer. One of the last black-and-white Wallace chillers. From a top 16mm print, DVD item #EW25D, VHS item #EW25

HUNCHBACK OF SOHO* (1966) Gunther Stoll, Pinkas Braun, HUNCHBACK OF SOHO* (1986) Gunther Stoil, Pinkas Braun, Monika Peitsch. Terrifying things are happening around the grounds of an old castle, within which is a boarding house for delinquent girls. Things get nutly when some of the girls die mysteriously. A hunchback killer is on the loose! Scotland Yard is called. More murders occur, the screams of the victims being silenced by the sound of a church organ Good creepy fun. Color, femm. DVD fetm #EW26D, VHS item #EW26 COLLEGE GIRL MURDERS* (1967) Joachim Fuchsberger, Isschi Glas Harry Biehauter. Scotland Yard is on the but for a hooded

COLLEGE GIRL MURDERS* (1967) Joachim Fuchsberger, Uschi Glas, Harry Riebaurer. Sootland Yard is on the hunt for a hooded killer who slays his victims with a ghastly combination of acid and poisor gas. Set in a posh girls' school, the killer uses booby-trapped bibles and maintains a dank dungeon overrun with slimy reptiles. One of the better '60s Wallace films. Color, 16mm. DVD item #EW27D, VHS item #EW27 JUNGEE THRIBLS

GOW THE KILLER* (1931 aka CANNIBAL ISLAND) The first likie desling with Cannibalism. Savage marital rights, native sexual alkie dealing with Canniba behavior, and sacrificial ceremonies are just some of the light topics covered in this obscure docu-drama. Considering its age, this is actual a very interesting film curio. 16mm. DVD item #J045D, VHS item #J045

DRUMS ALONG THE AMAZON* (1948) George Brent, Vera Raiston, Brian Aherne, Constance Bennett. A terrific thriller about a plane that crashes in the Amazon jungle. The survivors come across a strange fernale hunter who lives in the wilds of the steamy jungle. She has apparently found the secret of eternal youth! Recommended. Aka "Angels on the Amazon." 16mm. DVD item #J071D, VHS item #J071.

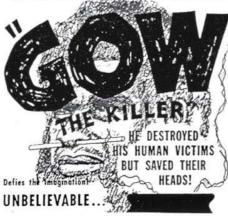
Angels on the Amazon. 16mm. DVD item #J071D, VHS item #J071.

ZAMBA* (1949) Jon Hall, June Vincent, Jane Nigh, Beau Bridges.

The tagline for this movie was pretty lurid: "Like the pounding beat of jungle drums!" This is a very obscure jungle thriller about a boy who is aided by a wild gorilla named Zamba, magnificently played by Ray "Crash" Corrigan. It is also very cheaply made, which of course, makes it a must. From 16mm. DVD item #J072D, VHS item #J072.

UNTAMED MISTRESS (1956) Allan Nixon, Jacqueline Fontain UNTAMED MISTRESS (1956) Alian Nixon, Jacqueline Forkaline, Byron Keith. A vicious ape tribe captures a beautiful girl. Two bold guys search for her, but are assailed by killer gorillas. Director Ron Ormand uses stock footage of topless natives. However, he also hired some busty stariets to play topless native girls who are captured by the apes. Ron obviously thought no one would be able to tell the difference between the stock footage gals and the Hollywood babes he hired. Right! Pure hilarity. Cotor, 35mm. DVD item #J056D, VHS item #J056

THRILLS BEYOND YOUR WILDEST DREAMS



SPYS, ESPIONAGE, & INTRIGUE

MAKE YOUR BETS LADIES* (1964) Eddie of enedetti, Daniel Ceccaldi. One of Eddie's better fill scret agent searching for a missing NATO weapons yeared a root that emits a possible ray. weeted agent searching for a missing ivor to weeter scientist wented a ring that emits a paralysis ray. Very James Bondis bod fun. From 16mm. DVD item #SP18D, VHS item #SP18 HAIL MAFIA* (1965) Eddie Constantine, Jack Klugman,

Silva. A terrific film with a top-notch cast! Jack and Henry play hit men ordered to kill Eddie. Jack is tom between his orders and the loyalty he feels to his old pal. Eddle. An intriguing look at the emotional make-up of Maffa hit men. A truly memorable climax. We definitely recommend this great crime/intrigue thriller. 16mm. DVD litem #SP190, VHS item #SP190 THE MURDERERS' CLUB OF BROOKLYN* (1967 aka

THE BODY IN CENTRAL PARK) George Nader, Heinz Weiss, Richa Munch, Helga Anders. A rich capitalist is blackmailed and threatene with the murder of his daughter. There's a terrific scene where gangste bust in and kidnap a young woman. One of three excellent Jerry Cotto films we now offer. Color, 35mm. DVD item #SP58D, VHS item #SP58. s Richard

films we now offer. Color, 35mm. DVD item #SP\$8D, VHS item #SP\$8

DEATH AND DIAMONDS* (1968) George Nader. Heinz Weiss,
Sylvia Solar, Carl Mohner. Agent Jerry Cotton infiltrates a big crime
syndicate that is planning a major diamond heist. Jerry is able to make
off with the loot himself—12 million bucks! Watch for a cool chase scene
at the film's climax. Color, 35mm. DVD item #SP\$9D, VHS item #SP\$9

BROADWAY'S DEADLY GOLD* (1969) George Nader, Heinz

Volume 15 Pables 15 Pables 15 Pables 16 Pable 16 Pab

Weiss, Heidy Bohlen. An FBI agent is killed by the mob after making off with five million in gold bars in a robbery gone bad. Agent Jerry Cotton is called in to bring the gang to justice and find out where his dead pal hid the missing gold. Color, 35mm. DVD item #SP57D, VHS item #SP57

sinister serials

PERILS OF PAULINE (1933, Universal) Evelyn Allen, William Desmond, James Durkin, Sonny Ray. 12 12 chapters. This serial has it all: cliff-hanging predicaments, villainous scoundrels, scenes, fisticuffs, etc. 16mm. DVD item #SL33D, VHS item #SL33 nous scoundrels, chase

MYSTERY SQUADRON* (1933, Mascot) Bob Stee Williams, J. Carroll Naish, 12 chapters. This Mascot serial is full of flying thrills and features Bob battling against a strange, notorious villain known only as "The Black Ace". 16mm. DVD item #\$L03D, VHS item #\$L03

FIGHTING WITH KIT CARSON* (1933, Mascot) Johnny Mack Brown, Betsy King Ross, Noah Beery, Sr. & Jr. 12 chapters. A pack train led by Kit Carson is attacked by mystery riders who want to steal a federal gold shipment. 16mm. DVD Item #\$L370, VHS Item #\$L37

SECRET AGENT X-9* (1945, Universal) Lloyd Bridges, Keye Luke, Jan Wiley, Samuel S. Hinds. 12 chapters. Bridges and other friendly foreign agents join forces to stop the Nazis from obtaining the formula for synthetic fuel. 16mm. DVD item #SL38D, VHS item #SL38



-ADVENTU

NOTE: Action-Adventure titles are just \$12.95 (unless otherwise noted)

CRIMSON ROMANCE* (1934, Mascot) Ben Lyon, Eric Von Stroheim, Sari Maritza, Eric Arnold. A German American and his best pal go to Germany before the start of WW2. When the war starts they must decide which country they will be loyal to. Von Stroheim is great! One of Mascot's better films. 16mm. DVD item #AA43D, VHS item #AA43D.

PARADISE EXPRESS* (1937, Republic) Grant Withers, Dorothy Appleby, Arthur Hoyt, Harry Davenport. A small railroad is being squeezed out of business by the tactics of a trucking company owned by Withers rides in to the rescue in this very well made early ecommended. 16mm. DVD Item #AA44D, VHS Item #AA44

MISSILES FROM HELL: (1958) Michael Rennie, Christopher Lee, Patricia Medina, David Knight. This forgotten war adventure centers around the secret Nazi missile installation of the V1 Rocket. Rennie is guerilla fighter who leads a group of Polish fighters on a mission to destroy the base and cripple the German war effort. Lee is terrific as a 16mm. DVD item #AA45D, VHS item #AA45

MYSTERY-SUSPENSE-CRIME-FILM NOIR

s otherwise noted)

(unless otherwise noted)

THE MIDNIGHT LADY* (1932, Chesterfield) John Darrow, Sarah Padden, Montagu Love, Claudia Dell. This is kind of a poverty row version of Madame X. Padden owns a notorious big-city speakeasy. When her long lost daughter is accused of murder, she decides to take the rap for her. The daughter has no idea that her mother is even alive. A pretty good Chesterfield, 16mm, DVD item #M366D, VHS item #M366 MATINEE IDOL* (1933) Miles Mander, Camilla Horn, Anthony Hankey, Marguerite Allan. A pretty well done British mystery. A well-known actor is murdered. Another performer becomes an amateur sleuth so she can prove her sister is innocent of the crime. Interesting to see venerable supporting actor Mander in a leading role. Film editor was David Lean. From 16mm. DVD Item #M367D, VHS Item #M367 THE INVISIBLE MENACE* (1938) Boris Karloff, Marie Wilson.

THE INVISIBLE MENACE* (1938) Boris Karloff, Marie Wilson THE INVISIBLE MENACE* (1938) Boris Karloff, Marie Wilson, Eddie Craven, Regis Toomey, Boris starred in this fine little B mystery about a murder at a military outpost. Craven and Wilson discover the murdered body. Who done it? Boris, of course, is suspected immediately. Gee, what a surprise. Karloff fans will want this obscure title for their collections. 16mm. DVD item #M368D, VHS item #M368

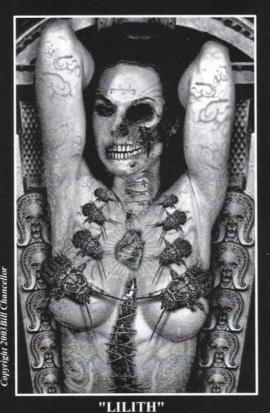
BORROWED HERO* (1941, Monogram) Alan Baxter, Florence Rice, John Hamilton, Constance Worth. Baxter goes from a struggling young lawyer to a crusading assistant DA in this Monogram crime film. He and Rice try to expose criminal corruption within a noted civic reform organization. As Monogram crime films go this one's pretty good. From 16mm, DVD Item #M369D, VHS Item #M369

FEDERAL FUGITIVES* (1941, PRC) Nell Hamilton, Doris Day, Victor Varconi, Charles C. Wilson. As PRCs go, this one is a cut above the norm. Hamilton plays a slick secret service agent assigned to probe the deaths of three of his colleagues in highly suspicious plane crashes. Watch for the great scene where Neil is slipped a mickey and sent aloft in a doomed plane! 16mm. DVD item #M370D, VHS item #M370

TOO LATE FOR TEARS* (1949) Lizabeth Scott, Don Defoe, Dan Duryea, Arthur Kennedy. Scott turns in one of the best "femme fatale" performances of all time as she portrays a scheming woman who eliminates everyone in her way as she tries to make off with 60-grand in blackmall money. An excellent script, top production values and great performances make this one of the very best 'film noir' titles we offer. Highly recommended. Newly transferred from a great original 15mm print. One of the best. DVD Item #M149D, VHS Item #M149

CIRCLE OF DANGER* (1951) Ray Milland, Patricia Roc, Hugh Sinclair. Ray's brother is killed while on a special mission during WW2, the mission's only casualty. This appears very strange to Ray, so after the war, he decides to investigate further. Travelling through Scotland, he meets former war mates of his brother, but everyone pretends to know nothing or very little about his brother's death. This leads Ray to suspect murder. Hmmm... 16mm. DVD item #M371D, VHS item #M371

WHY MUST I DIE?* (1960, AIP) Terry Moore, Debra Paget, Bert Freed, Juli Redding, Padget commits murder. Moore is arrested instead, the tried and sentenced to die. This engaging crime thriller takes you right through Terry's trial and up to her last minutes on death row. When Padget is finally ready to confess, Moore is already strapped into the electric chair! Will she be saved? A very ambitious AIP thriller that we strongly recommended. 16mm. DVD item #M372D, VHS item #M372



SCARLET STREET COVER ARTIST

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VAL LEWTON

Continued from page 73

In BEDLAM, an independent and freethinking young woman—Nell Bowen (Anna Lee)—pushes for much-needed reforms at the titular establishment, but runs afoul of her patron, the gross, lecherous Lord Mortimer (Billy House), and St. Mary's sadistic apothecary general, George Sims (Karloff). Sims delights in exploiting his weak-minded charges without compunction, including putting on a crude vaudeville for the amusement of Mortimer, during which a boy (Glen Vernon) is painted gold and dies of asphyxiation.

In the end, Sims receives his just desserts at the hands of the patients he has so long tormented. BEDLAM is later and lesser Lewton (who again cowrote under his nom de guerre, Carlos Keith), and only tangentially horror, but it benefits from another solid Karloff performance and handsome direction from Mark Robson.

With BEDLAM, Lewton's brief but brilliant horror career at RKO came to a close. He would go on to a stint at Paramount, making only one film, MY OWN TRUE LOVE (1949). For MGM, Lewton produced PLEASE BELIEVE ME (1950). An atmospheric Western, APACHE DRUMS (1951), followed shortly before Lewton's death of a heart attack the same year. The nine horror movies produced by Val Lewton stand the test of time by virtue of their mature themes, the intelligent manner in which those themes are presented, and some of the finest shock and suspense sequences ever committed to film. The films are explorations in utter despair—despairing characters in a despairing world doomed in the mire of their own, personal Gehennas. Lewton, so fond of literary quotes in his films, would have agreed with yet one more poet—Oscar Wilde—who wrote "We are each our own Devil, and we make this world our hell."

SCREEN AND SCREEN AGAIN

Continued from page 30

his wife Chris, and makeup FX wizard Tom Savini. The color tones are very clean and crisp, and the 5.1 Surround Mix enhances the action sequences. Included are trailers, TV and radio spots, photo gallery, Romero biography, and a preview of the DAWN comic book. (A color miniversion of issue one comes with the set.)

On disc two, the Extended ("Cannes") version gets the makeover with a new commentary by producer Richard Rubinstein. His discussion from a lo-

gistical perspective on the film is fascinating. More photo galleries and a TV ad for the Monroeville Mall round out

Disc three satiates what fans have hungered for most: Dario Argento's European version, completely remastered in widescreen, and officially available here for the first time. Argento's cut is very different, and fans will delight in comparing the strengths and weaknesses with the Stateside version. A lively commentary from the film's stars alone makes the set worth owning. Keeping with the international motif are foreign trailers, TV spots, photo galleries, and an Argento bio.

The set concludes on disc four with some fabulous extras. THE DEAD WILL WALK is a new documentary featuring major cast and crew members (including actors who have rarely been interviewed, such as David Crawford and Clayton Hill). Roy Frumkes' excellent DOCUMENT OF THE DEAD (1985) is included here, along with some rare home movie footage shot on-set and a tour of the Monroeville Mall featuring Ken Foree, Lenny Lies, and Clayton Hill.

Anchor Bay has proven once again that they are of, by, and for the fans. Did anyone doubt it?

-Brooke Perry

LEGENDARY JERRY COLLECTION Paramount—\$54.99

This is a fabulous set for Jerry Lewis fans—wherever they are. Clearly Paramount thinks they're out there or they wouldn't have released these movies. If you consider the man an overrated hack, there's probably nothing in this set likely to change your mind. But if you, like me, think he has moments of real comedic genius, is a damn fine actor, and at his best is one of the most innovative funnymen America ever produced (and I'm well aware I seem to be swimming against the tide here), then you will find many moments to savor in this collection.

There are fans who fondly remember Lewis' early movies with Dean Martin, while others prefer his starring roles in movies directed by Frank Tashlin, and still others nominate the movies Lewis himself directed as his best work. This set includes some from each era, all of which offer fine examples of his talents and those of the often outstanding supporting cast members. (Most memorable among these are Del Moore and Kathleen Freeman.) And of course, it includes probably his most famous movie, THE NUTTY PROFESSOR (1963).

THE STOOGE (1953), in black-andwhite, is one of those charming early movies in which Jerry plays his famous "idiot" paired with Dean Martin, who positively oozes charm and sex appeal. The only other monochrome movie in this set is THE DELICATE DE-LINQUENT (1957); the remainder comprises THE BELLBOY (1960), THE LA-DIES MAN (1961), THE ERRAND BOY (1961), THE PATSY (1964), and several of my favorite Lewis movies: CINDER-FÉLLA (1960), THE NUTTY PROFESSOR, THE DISORDERLY ORDERLY (1964, and what a great title!), and THE FAMILY JEWELS (1965), wherein Jerry plays a whole assortment of wacky characters.

At his best, Lewis is a master of timing and physical comedy; some of his contortions are legendary. His weak point-especially when he directs himself-is his tendency to dwell on emotional scenes to the point that they become somewhat maudlin. Lewis also has an unfortunate habit of patting himself on the back. Case in point: THE ERRAND BOY, one of the Lewisdirected titles in this set, where we have to suffer through a denouement that labors the point of Jerry's comic genius as seen through the eyes of movie studio head honchos. Fans being fans, those of us who love Jerry will forgive him these occasional lapses in taste.

Probably the most inventive movie in the collection is THE BELLBOY—entire movie with no dialogue for Jerry. The film is full of Chaplinesque sight gags and amusing cameos (it's a great movie to play spot the celebrity, as long as your memory reaches back to the sixties), and there's some highly surreal humor when Jerry's character meets Jerry himself.

Other highlights: Jerry's take on the Cinderella fairy tale greatly benefits from Ed Wynn's comic turn as the fairy godfather; and THE FAMILY JEWELS, which features another appearance of Jerry's Nutty Professor character (though this time he's moonlighting as a photographer).

The set's best feature is THE DISOR-DERLY ORDERLY, the last Lewis movie directed by Frank Tashlin. The final ambulance-and-stretcher chase scene through the Hollywood Hills has to be seen to be believed.

Casual viewers will be most familiar,

of course, with THE NUTTY PROFES-SOR; though it's not the comic's best work, it has some wonderful moments. The NUTTY disc includes the



most comprehensive bonus in the set, a retrospective featurette which includes a recent interview with Lewis. Most of the other discs boast limited bonuses, primarily trailers and outtakes, often in sepia or monochrome and not in the best condition. But for real Lewis fans, they offer a rare chance to see the serious director behind the clown.

-Alex Paige

THE CARDINAL Warner Bros.—\$26.99

Not too long ago, when film companies relied on books for source material, Columbia Pictures presented, as their 1963 Christmas release, a three-hour drama about the 22-year journey of a Boston priest from a poor parish in Massachusetts to a position in the College of Cardinals in Rome. Since it wasn't necessary then for a high concept to override good storytelling, audiences actually showed up in decent numbers to see this thought-provoking drama. Directed by Otto Preminger and adapted by Robert Dozier from Henry Morton Robinson's 1950 novel, THE CARDINAL is a compelling and intelligent work, despite its shortcomings. Apart from its unwieldy length, the

film is hurt by the sincere but less than riveting presence of Tom Tryon in the central role of Father Stephen Fermoyle. Tryon, whose other famous credit was I MARRIED A MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE (1958), eventually owned up to his limitations as an actor and found success as a bestselling author, his best-known books being *The Other* (1971) and *Crowned Heads* (1976).

THE CARDINAL succeeds overall because of the many fascinating topics it covers in its episodic plot line. These include the importance placed on raising money over theology by an elderly Boston monsignor (Cecil Kellaway); a powerful sequence in which the young priest must decide whether to save his sister (Carol Lynley) or her baby during a potentially fatal delivery; the church's stance on mixed marriages; the bigotry of a Vatican official (Tullio Carminati) who turns his back on a black priest (Ossie Davis) seeking help in combating the Ku Klux Klan; and Hitler's rise to power and its acceptance by members of the Austrian church, who failed to perceive the danger ahead.

Preminger directs with a steady hand, helped greatly by some excellent performances, chief among them Burgess Meredith as a sickly priest who teaches our hero humility; John Huston (in an Oscar-nominated turn) as a demanding cardinal; Josef Meinrad as a foolish bishop who thinks nothing about accommodating the Nazis and pays for his miscalculation; and Lynley, who renounces God when she is forbidden to marry her Jewish boyfriend (John Saxon). Special praise goes to Jerome Moross's gorgeous theme music and the spectacular cinematography by Leon Shamroy (who earned one of the movie's six Oscar nods), beautifully preserved on the letterboxed DVD.

Included in this two-disc set are not only the theatrical trailer (the details are rushed through by the narrator as if he is trying to catch a train) and a behind-the-scenes featurette, but also a two-hour documentary on Preminger's career. PREMINGER: ANATOMY OF A FILMMAKER (1991), hosted by Burgess Meredith, has some terrific interviews with such actors as Vincent Price, Frank Sinatra, and George C. Scott, as well as insights from Preminger's talented title and logo designer, Saul Bass. There are generous clips from LAURA (1944), THE MOON IS BLUE (1953, including rare glimpses of the concurrently made German version), THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN ARM (1955), and ADVISE AND CONSENT (1962). Although there 's praise for Preminger's important role in challenging and subsequently demolishing the outdated production code, there's also plenty of negative comments about his famous temper, especially from Tom Tryon, who looks back on the experience of making THE CARDINAL with such horror that he seems about to cry.

-Barry Monush



Another suspect, another dozen or so kill- decades: Richard Briers in "Death's ings-another fun-filled episode of MID- Shadow," Robert Hardy in "Dead SOMER MURDERS.

MIDSOMER MURDERS

Continued from page 28

sequence for early episodes of MID-SOMER MURDERS is clearly patterned after that of the Joan Hickson MISS MARPLE series. The plots are generally built around traditional elements of British country life: competitions to decide the best-kept village in "Judgement Day," gypsy encampments in "Blood Will Out," the local hunt in "Death of a Stranger," crop circles (!) in "Electric Vendetta."

Where the show breaks with the traditionally staid nature of the traditional British whodunit, however, is in its focus on the sexual goings-on in Midsomer, in particular a refreshingly non-judgemental attitude towards

homosexuality.

An openly gay male couple (played by Nick Woodeson and Richard Huw) appear in "Death of a Hollow Man' (adapted by Caroline Graham from her own 1989 novel), the female equivalent (Merelina Kendall and Charmian May) in "Electric Vendetta," an illicit lesbian affair is at the heart of the unfortunately-titled "Tainted Fruit," two gay priests (Jonathan Hackett and Alex Dakin) are despatched in "The Straw Woman," and in "Death's Shadow" Barnaby and Troy discover one of their suspects (Nick Dunning) in bed with a rent boy (Terence Corrigan). In this latter example, the opinionated Sergeant Troy is shocked not by the thought of two men performing a sexual act, but by the age discrepancy between the participants. (The younger man, Terence Corrigan, is later stabbed to death with a Nazi dagger in the episode "Dead Man's Eleven.")

As murders go, death by Nazi dagger is quite staid for Midsomer, where folk often meet their fate in a pleasingly macabre manner-a beheading "Death's Shadow," injection of liquid nicotine in "Strangler's Wood, use of a slide projector as a blunt instrument in "Beyond the Grave," use of a drinks cabinet to crush a man to death in "Destroying Angel," locking the victim in a walk-in refrigerator in "A Talent For Life"-and the list goes on. One poor fellow in "Ring Out Your Dead" is unlucky enough to be forcibly

drowned while suffering an asthma attack, and as for the method used to do away with the victims in "Electric Vendetta"—well,

the title says it all.

The sight of the killer's gloved hands as he or she goes about his or her lethal business is a familiar element of virtually every episode. But of the suspects available to Barnaby and Troy, who fits those gloves? The cast list for every show is made up of stars of British TV and films over the Man's Eleven," Richard Johnson in "Death of a Stranger," Pru-

nella Scales in "Beyond the Grave," and Honor Blackman in "A Talent for Life" to name but a very few. Of the younger generation, Orlando Bloom has a small but significant part to play in "Judgement Day." Current Miss Moneypenny Samantha Bond can be seen in the episode "Destroying Angel." How many of them make it out of the show alive,

vou'll have to see for vourself.

In the midst of all this carnage, Inspector Tom Barnaby is a reassuringly ordinary presence—"a decent man in an indecent world," to quote actor John Nettles. He lacks the quirks of a Morse or a Sherlock Holmes, but such touches would be a virtual overkill in a series devoted to a quite literal overkill in other areas. Barnaby lives an uneventful life with wife Joyce (Jane Wymark) and grown-up daughter Cully (Laura Howard). His idea of a personal crisis is putting on a bit of weight. ("Barnaby is not dysfunctional in any way, and that alone makes him a highly unusual TV detective," notes star John Nettles.) As Barnaby, Nettles is the steady center of MIDSOMER MUR-DERS. He is no stranger to the world of the TV policeman, having played the lead in the long-running BBC cop drama BERGERAC. Indeed, such was Nettles' fame as Jim Bergerac that he stayed away from TV work for many years after his decade-long stint as the Jersey-based detective.

Acorn Media offers six box sets of MIDSOMER MURDERS episodes andexcept for releasing them out of order-they've done a splendid job with them. Each set contains four or five episodes (four in the first two sets, five in sets three through six) in vivid color and crisp sound. Included in the sets are maps of Midsomer, production notes, cast filmographies, and a

bio of Caroline Graham.

And what of the future for MID-SOMER MURDERS? How many years does the show have left? More than you might ever suspect. A landmark £10 million deal was recently struck between Britain's independent station ITV and the production company, which will keep MIDSOMER MURDERS on the air virtually forever. This is not to say that the cast will remain un-changed, however. Daniel Casey departed in the Season Seven episode

"The Green Man," to be replaced by John Hopkins as cockney copper Dan Scott. Hopkins, too, will be leaving in Season Nine. John Nettles, too, may not be around for much longer. "There will be a time when I'm too old for more," he says. "Television history is littered with people like me who went on long past their sell-by date." By naming the show after the district in which it occurs rather than after the main character, the makers have assured that a change of personnel will make no difference to the content of the show-there'll be murder and mayhem in Midsomer for years to come.

BOOK ENDS

Continued from page 70

chillier stories in the Chronicles, Clay and Susan Griffith introduce readers to a creep named Crouch. He's a memorable creation.

Martin Powell evokes a tawdry carnival atmosphere straight out of NIGHT-MARE ALLEY (1947) in "The Abominable Ice Man." Far from his current stomping grounds of Los Angeles (not that Carl can stomp, exactly, in those sneakers), our hangdog newshound encounters a sideshow exhibit that's dead-but not quite dead enough.

Max Allen Collins traps Kolchak in an "Open House," a delightfully bloody tale reminiscent of HOUSE ON HAUNT-ED HILL (1959), THE HAUNTING (1963), THE AMITYVILLE HORROR (1979), and just about every other haunted house

thriller you can name.

Richard Valley's "Shadows from the Screen" does a splendid job of evoking the TV series and incorporating its supporting characters. But more, its story of the spirit of a Golden Age actress-in reality little more than a glorified bit player, obviously based on Bess Flowers-getting her due when her ghost starts infusing itself into classic movies is a creative addition to the Kolchak mythos. The fact that her presence in those films condemns the real stars to a kind of monochromatic limbo in the land of the living is both quirky and creepy. Rather than merely trade on the Kolchak concept, Valley actually brings something new to the table that is also fitting.

Mark Dawidziak returns to NIGHT STALKER territory when Carl is summoned to a seaside town for an "Interview With a Vampire"-Barnabas Collins. Chuck Dixon's atmospheric "Barrens" strands Carl and a female companion in New Jersey's Pine Barrens, home of the legendary Jersey Devil. Mark Leiren-Young sends our hero to Canada for an encounter with another legendary creature—a Windigo—that almost leaves him "Frost-Bitten." Ed Gorman and Richard Dean Starr's "The Shadow That Shapes the Night" explores the Native American legends that informed the TV episodes "Bad Medicine" and

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VIRGINIA MAYO

Continued from page 59

it! Then he went to New York, saw his daughter, and said goodbye to her. He came back and he just didn't help himself. Maybe it wasn't possible in his case. Maybe he was too far gone; I don't know. All of us were a little group acting together at Warners. There was Gene, Gordon, and me-and not Doris! (Laughs) No, not Doris-she wasn't in that group.

SS: Would you be interested in getting back into pictures?

VM: Not really. They're not writing the kind of stuff that I would do in the first place.

SS: Is there any part that would make you come back to films?

VM: Well, a decent part—like if I played somebody's mother or grandmother. It would depend upon the writing. I'm not too anxious to act-period. I've just had it! I had the chance and I did it well and I'm satisfied. I don't need to come back.

CRIMSON CHRONICLES

Continued from page 17

alumni Basil Gogos, who still manages to breathe life after death into the classic monsters after all of these years. (A glorious illustrated book of his dreadfully beautiful work is due out soon.) Sara Karloff was my neighbor in the celebrity room and her charming self.

The Scarlet Street gang seems to multiply with each Bash and their Saturday evening dinner has become a must-attend function. (See the photo on page I was happy to meet so many new Scarlet Street Urchins! I am grateful to be a permanent guest of the Monster Bash. It is a highlight of every year.



Is this the new King of Skull Islandor just another contender?

Next year we're in a new hotel that I'm looking forward to monster-fying.

Richard Valley and Tom Amorosi were welcomed houseguests for a cou-ple of weeks in July. I think Richard got a lot of work done and I know Tom got a lot of sun! The fellows actually house-sat for me while I was away at Comic Con. It's great to see the Scarlet Street gang more often here in sunny California. I guess our next get-together will happen on my birthday, to be held on Saturday, November 19th. Check in on the Scarlet Street Boards (www.scarletstreet.com) for details!

ELIZABETH RUSSELL

Continued from page 63

ER: No, I only worked with Bob Wise. At the time, I was into astrology, because I was a friend of Maria Montez and she always had her astrologer to lunch when I was there. He became the famous Carroll Righter. Anyway, I was learning astrology, and when Bob Wise started on the picture I said, "You are starting a new career." He never forgot it! (Laughs) I can't get over myself!

SS: You might have had a second career as an astrologer.

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ER: Well, I was learning it, and then one day I dropped it. I thought, "What am I interested in this for? I've already been through Nirvana and a few others and the Catholic nuns taught me everything I'll ever need to know!'

SS: THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE is such a fine study of children.

ER: Yes, it was. And so many people live like that. The child gets lost in a world of her own imagination.

SS: The Lewton pictures are classics.

ER: I still get fan mail. The fans write and say, "We've seen all your pictures" and they ask for autographs. I don't know what they do with all these signatures!

SS: Looking back on your career, do you

have any regrets? ER: I think I quit the picture business too quickly. I might eventually have gotten somewhere. I had known Selznick when I was with the Powers agency. MGM, Paramount, and others would have talent scouts, and I happened to be in the Rotogravure section and everywhere else. Paramount had an acting school. I was in theater programs and other things. They wanted me to go to school, but I was too busy. I had come out for Paramount, and got a lot of publicity in Louella Parsons' column. I also knew Hedda Hopper. I suppose I should have gone to school as they suggested, but I had a young son who had to go to school, and I just could not leave him. I really wanted to write. And now I have accomplished that, to my own satisfaction.

SS: What do you think of the arts today? ER: There's no art anymore! Today, each script is almost the same. Then, the films were made from books. There's no fiction anymore, none worthy of the name. Fiction is finished. My genera-

tion, compared to this one, is so different. The generations-it's a wonder we can talk to each other!

KARLOFF AND LUGOSI

Continued from page 31

THE MAN WITH NINE LIVES Columbia Tristar—\$14.99

THE MAN WITH NINE LIVES (1940) was the third in a series of four—or five, if you count the comedy THE BOOGIE MAN WILL GET YOU (1942)—mad science melodramas Boris Karloff made for Columbia Studios. It's also probably the least impressive of the lot, though it remains an enjoyable time-waster.

Dr. Tim Mason (Roger Pryor) and his nurse/fiancee, Judith Blair (Jo Ann Sayers) travel to a secluded island to inspect the lab of the mysterious Dr. Kravaal (Karloff), who disappeared 10 years earlier while conducting research on a cancer cure that involves "freezing" patients. To their shock, they find Kravaal himself frozen in ice, alongside several adversaries who tried to stop his experiments. The revived Kravaal remains bent on finishing his experiment, even if it means using his "guests" as human guinea pigs.

This doesn't approach Karloff's best work-the Kravaal role is badly underwritten, so he has little to work withyet NINE LIVES crackles with life whenever he's on screen. He's particularly effective-and downright unnervingas the film approaches its climax. In fact, the film's biggest problem is that Karloff simply isn't on screen enough. He doesn't appear until nearly 20 of the film's 74 minutes have elapsed. Perhaps the idea was to give the character a Harry Limelike offscreen buildupbut instead of generating tension the story simply spins its wheels with a lot of pseudoscientific medical mumbo jumbo until Boris shows up. The film also suffers from a bizarre final scene in which Mason offers an apologia for Kravaal's actions and calls him "a great man." Perhaps Kravaal's intentions were noble, but he puts his experiments ahead of all else and proceeds with a depraved indifference to human life. Kravaal's methods have a disturbing, Nazi-like utilitarianism. Maybe Kravaal isn't crazy, but he's whatever Josef Mengele was.

Those points aside, NINE LIVES remains a fun watch and includes some fine flourishes—for example, the sight

"No, no, Stanley—you're <u>not</u> Bela Lugosi!" Boris Karloff handles an identity crisis on the set of BLACK FRIDAY (1940).



of Kravaal frozen in the ice like the Monster from FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN (1943).

The good news for DVD buyers is that, not only is this transfer is far superior to Columbia's so-so DVD of THE DEVIL COMMANDS (1941), which is often considered the best in the series, but it's priced 10 bucks cheaper at \$14.99. There's a minimum of speckling, no other discernible blemishes, solid blacks and rich gray scale, and clean mono sound. We can only hope that Sony, which purchased Columbia/TriStar early in 2005, will see the light and continue with higher quality, lower priced releases of its classic horror titles. How about releasing THE BLACK ROOM (1935) or THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG (1939) next!

-Mark Clark

BOOK ENDS

Continued from page 80

"The Energy Eater." Joe Gentile probes the heart of hatred and violence in "Shrug of Atlas." And Brett Matthews' "The Pretty Dead Girl" is a different sort of Kolchak story, disturbing in a way that stays with you long after you've read it.

If I've left out a few names, it's only because space is limited. There isn't a single dog in this fantastic anthology—except for Jason Henderson's "Wet Dog of Galveston," that is. Grab Kolchak: The Night Stalker Chronicles at your first opportunity. Kolchak's comin' back!

-Barry Knapp

CHAD ALLEN

Continued from page 55

that he gets most of what he's looking for by holding people by the throat and tossing them around a little. This is a guy who's got secrets, who's got some anger and resentment floating around. Believe it or not, we didn't finally decide to make that statement until the night before we filmed it. I'd go home after 12 hours on the set and put on paper what we'd be doing the next day, and call the director in the middle of the night and make suggestions. That scene was really a mess; we didn't know what to do with it. I thought it was right to nail this idea and expose Donald a little bit, and Ron really took to it. So without permission from anybody else, he and I made that decision—in the hope that nobody would come after us. And nobody did! (Laughs) If we'd been filming this within the usual studio system, there's no way we would've gotten away with that!

SS: Do you ever wonder where you'd be in your career if The Globe hadn't run those revealing photos?

CA: Well, I would've come out no matter what. I didn't really come out in response to *The Globe*; it was a few years after the article was published that I came out publicly. To tell you



The "shocking" tabloid photo that came close to destroying Chad Allen's career at age 21.

the truth—and this is still amazing to me-there wasn't really all that much response to the Globe story. Other than gay people who talked about it on the internet and some kids who discussed it online across the country, nobody really knew about it. It didn't reach all that many people. In fact, I didn't choose to come out then. I wasn't ready. Had I come out then, it would have been a disaster. I came out two years later because it was what I wanted to do. That decision was so independent of the outing that I would have made it no matter what. Yeah, I've sometimes wondered if it would have been different if I hadn't come out, but when I think about that I always think, "God, I'd be so unhappy." It's so much of what my life is; my whole life is about effecting change in that arena. It's about teaching the next generation of gay men and women to love themselves.

SS: Throughout Hollywood's history, gay actors have lied about themselves and pretended to straight relationships strictly for

the benefit of the public.

CA: Just that sort of thing was proposed to me, back when I was 21 and the outing happened. They said they could get me a girlfriend and cover it all up. That was one option that was presented to me. It just sounded so horrible. They had the wrong guy; that's not what I'm made of.

SS: Young gays look to someone for a role model. They can't expect to find one when gay people in the public eye go to such pains

to hide their sexuality.

CA: You're right; it's important that they have someone. So many of us didn't have the right kind of support when we were growing up, and I think that's changing. I'm grateful for that. There's an organization now called Lifeworks, which is a mentorship organization pairing up young gay and lesbian kids from 18 to 25 with mentors to help guide them, to give them the sense of one generation passing things on to the next. It's something we missed. When I'm talking to you, it's important for me not to whitewash my story. I've talked about the good and the bad and everything in between. It's important to just be honest about my journey and what I've learned along the way, in the hope that the journeys of the kids I'm mentoring now will be that much easier than mine was, just as mine was easier than the guys who came before me.

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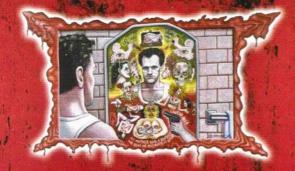
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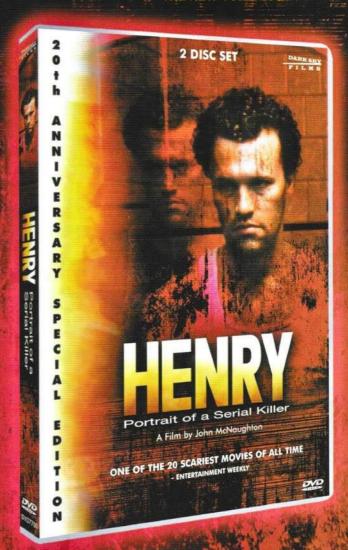
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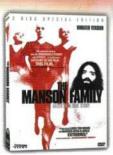
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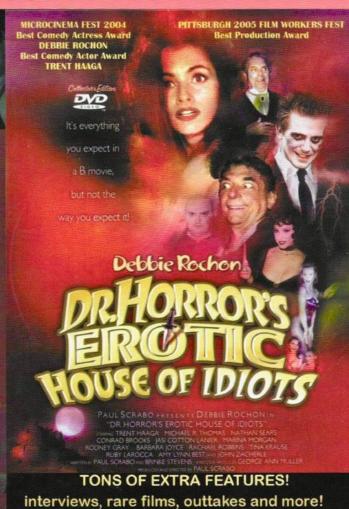
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Set in the Victorian Age and regarded by many as the finest of the fourteen films in the Sherlock Holmes/Basil Rathbone series. 'The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes' was originally released in 1939 by Twentieth Century-Fox.

Professor Moriarty (George Zucco) has at long last been brought to trial for murder. But the 'Napoleon of Crime' is acquitted after the court finds a lack of sufficient evidence. Moments after the judge releases the defendant. Sherlock Holmes dashes into the courtroom with proof that will destroy Moriarty's alibi and send the professor to the gallows. Alas, he is too late and the criminal mastermind is set free.

Moriarty wastes no time in plotting his next crime, but in order to be successful he must divert the attention of the Great Detective. Enter Miss Ann Brandon (Ida Lupino), who calls on Holmes and his companion Dr. Watson (Nigel Bruce) after she and her brother receive anonymous letters containing a drawing of a man with an albatross hung around his neck, and a date written above the picture. Their father received the same baffling letter years before and was found murdered on the date inscribed in his letter.

Are these mysterious letters but erroneous distractions? Are they clues to a case irrelevant to the exploits of the evil Professor Moriarty? Or are these portents of disaster inexorably linked to the master criminal's plan to commit a crime that will shake the very foundation of the British Empire? It is for Holmes and Watson to sort out this mystery and, hopefully, eliminate the menace of Professor Moriarty.









The ADVENTURES of SHERLOCK HOLMES





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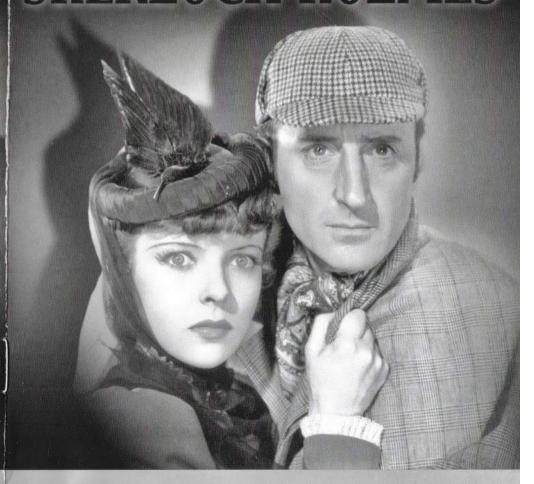
The ADVENTURES of SHERLOCK HOLMES



WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE EXECUTORS OF THE LATE SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

DIRECTED BY ALFRED WERKER

The ADVENTURES of SHERLOCK HOLMES



STARRING BASIL RATHBONE AND NIGEL BRUCE

Sherlock Holmes

The ADVENTURES of SHERLOCK HOLMES



- 1. OPEN
- 2. THE GENIUS OF EVIL
- 3. CONSULTING SHERLOCK HOLMES
- 4. RENEWING AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE
- 5. MURDER MOST FOUL
- 6. RECONSTRUCTING THE CRIME
- 7. A CHANT FOR THE DEAD
- 8. MASQUERADE PARTIES
- 9. BULLFINCH'S MYTHOLOGY
- 10. THE KILLER STRIKES!
- 11. THE CRIME OF THE CENTURY
- 12. "ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR HOLMES."
- 13. END CREDITS

According to film critic Howard Barnes in a 1939 review in *The New York Herald Tribune*, extraordinary good sense went "into the making of THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES. Based rather freely on William Gillette's dramatization of the great detective stories, the film is at once an exciting thriller and a faithful recreation of a famous literary figure."

To refer to THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (1939), Twentieth Century-Fox's second and last Sherlock Holmes film starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce, as being "based rather freely" on William Gillette's 1899 play SHERLOCK HOLMES is — to say the least — an understatement. Virtually nothing of the stage work remains beyond the characters of Sherlock Holmes, Dr. John H.

Watson, Professor James Moriarty, Billy the pageboy, and Bassick, Moriarty's henchman. There's no romance for Holmes and — praise be! — no wedding plans. The film's narrative, which concerns Moriarty's plot to destroy his rival's reputation by committing the crime of the century right under Holmes' prominent nose, is entirely new and, in the words of Chris Steinbrunner and Norman Michaels in *The Films of Sherlock Holmes* (1978), "so complicated and unwieldy that it is embarrassing to see it almost work."

As noted in my audio commentary for this DVD, Steinbrunner and Michaels have a point, but they fail to mention the primary reason for the confusion — as released, THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES is missing some essential pieces of its puzzle. What ultimately was left out of the movie ties up most of the plot and lends the movie precisely those elements that might have won approval from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's estate, which disapproved of Fox's handling of the canon. (This, among other factors, led to Fox dropping the series, which was picked up three years later by Universal Pictures.) As originally mapped out by screenwriters William A. Drake and Edwin Blum, the Napoleon of Crime's scheme depended largely on the sort of personal vendetta or avenging death - one finds in such canonical tales as "The Gloria Scott" (1893), "The Resident Patient" (1893), "Black Peter" (1904), "Wisteria Lodge" (1908), "The Red Circle" (1911), and the final Holmes novel, The Valley of Fear (1914), which concern the employment of no less a genius than Professor Moriarty to mete out bloody

In THE ADVENTURES, Moriarty (George Zucco) secures the services of Mateo (George Regas), whose one aim in life is to

-THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

render lifeless the lovely Ann Brandon (Ida Lupino) and her brother, Lloyd (Peter Wiles), in much the same manner as he murdered their father 10 years previously. The professor manipulates Mateo in order to draw Sherlock Holmes' attention away from his true plans, and further muddles the waters by casting doubt on the motives of Brandon family solicitor Jerrold Hunter (Alan Marshal), who seemingly lets Lloyd Brandon walk alone and helpless to his doom.

Differences between the completed picture and Drake and Blum's final script for THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (dated June 14, 1939, and turned in after the film was already before the cameras) begin as early as the opening courtroom scene, which originally explained how the professor, charged with murder, had beaten the rap. Holmes bursts upon the scene, crying, "But, my Lord, you can't let Moriarty go free! He killed Lorait! I can prove it! I can destroy his alibi!" Holmes never gets the opportunity to present his proof, though, and Moriarty is released. Here's some of the missing dialogue (Barrow's line remains in the film):

Barrows: Your Lordship, my client has been acquitted! He cannot be tried twice on the same charge!

Justice (dryly): I am only too well aware of that regrettable fact.

Moriarty leans forward in the prisoner's box and speaks for the first time.

Moriarty (indulgently): Let him talk, Barrows!
Mr. Sherlock Holmes will be unhappy if he
doesn't get to tell how clever he's been!

Holmes glares at Moriarty, who grins back at

him ironically. The implacable enmity of the two men is very apparent in this exchange.

Justice: It can't help the case now, but I'll hear you, Mr. Holmes. Clear the court!

Moriarty: A pity you're too late, Holmes — but it's reassuring to see you here at all. I was beginning to fear your powers were failing . . . (his voice becomes almost sincere) . . . and that, I assure you, I should deplore to see happen!

Justice: Well, Mr. Holmes?

Holmes turns to the scholarly-looking little man who accompanied him into the courtroom.

Holmes: May I present Dr. Gates, chief astronomer at the Greenwich Observatory.

Gates: On the night of February eighteenth, between the hours of seven and eleven-thirty, the master motor clock at the Greenwich Observatory, which controls the standard chronometers in every part of the United Kingdom — that clock went mad!

Justice: What absurdity is this, Dr. Gates?

Gates (earnestly): Your Lordship, I would rather be discountenanced than know this true! How much the scientific data this fluctuation of time destroys . . .

Justice (impatiently): Can you explain this, Holmes?

Holmes: Well, my Lord, Moriarty's alibi was based on directly wired Greenwich time. So I went down to the Observatory and found

Dr. Gates already troubled about certain discrepancies in observations for the night of February eighteenth. Together, we have figured out mathematically this phenomenon. Professor Moriarty found a means to tamper with the Greenwich control clock that night, to cover his alibi!

Justice: Ridiculous!

Moriarty: If you don't mind, this is becoming boring. May I leave?

Apparently, it was decreed that not only Moriarty, but the entire audience for THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES would find this complex explanation — which has absolutely no bearing on the rest of the film — boring, so out it went.

The celebrated scene between Holmes and Moriarty that follows is also missing a snippet or two of Drake and Blum's dialogue, again pertaining to the professor's alibi. Moriarty has offered the detective a lift to 221b Baker Street ("Cabs are scarce in this rain.") and the two settle down for the ride:

Moriarty (inhales deeply): Ah, this air — after six weeks in that foul place! An ingenious theory of yours, Holmes — that about the Greenwich clock. It might have done me much damage, if you had come upon it earlier. You're clever, Holmes! Almost as clever as I! A pity we must always work against each other.

Holmes (calmly ignoring the implication): I'm curious to know how you managed to concentrate a counter-magnetic field to sufficient intensity to affect the observatory clock motors.

Moriarty: So you found that out, too!

With such plot mechanics bordering on the science-fictional, it's little wonder that 20th Century Fox trumpeted THE ADVENTURES as "The Struggle of Super-Minds in the Crime of the Century!" Moriarty continues, in dialogue reminiscent of that written by Conan Doyle in "The Final Problem" (1893):

Moriarty: You must stop pursuing me! You stand in the way, not only of an individual, but of an organization — the extent of which you do not realize! Not to stand clear will mean inevitable destruction for you!

Holmes (quietly): That risk is part of my trade . . .

Moriarty (with deadly venom): Then it is a duel to the end!

It is for this reason that Professor Moriarty invents his crime of the century — the theft of the Crown Jewels from the Tower of London. As noted, the plot involves diverting the Great Detective's attention with a second crime in the making — the revenge-driven murder of the entire Brandon family. As another Fox press release puts it: "The strange case of the chinchilla fetish — the Traitor's Gate — the fiendish instrument that strangles, crushes, vanishes — the albatross of doom! A woman in love, the victim! The British crown jewels, the loot!"

Unfortunately, neither the writers nor director Alfred Werker could decide where to place the explanation of this second crime without stopping the action dead. Whereas many consider the final tussle between Holmes and Moriarty — which follows the capture of the Brandon family's self-styled executioner — anticlimactic, a true anticlimax would have been a lengthy expository scene

THE ADVENTURES OF

at Scotland Yard, so it was summarily discarded. The following dialogue stems from the first of three endings submitted — in this case, on June 16, 1939 — after filming had begun. (Two later endings were turned in on September 25th, the third and shortest making it into the final cut.) Not only is the June 16th submission a plausible explanation for much that remains murky in THE ADVENTURES — explaining the backstory and exonerating Jerrold Hunter — it is, as noted, precisely the sort of plot twist that might have delighted the heart of Conan Doyle himself.

Inspector Bristol is seated at his desk.

Another inspector stands beside him. At the end of the desk Mateo is seated, handcuffed. Two detectives in plain clothes stand alongside him. On the other side of the desk stands Sherlock Holmes — and, near him, Ann and Watson.

Holmes: That's why Mateo, here, was employed by Professor Moriarty — an important cog in the wheel of this rather extraordinary crime.

Ann: But, Mr. Holmes — why should he have wanted to kill my brother — and me?

Holmes glances at her, somewhat disturbed, then decides to face the issue squarely.

Holmes: He claims — I'm terribly sorry, Miss Brandon — that your father killed his father many years ago — and stole the mine that made him rich.

Mateo (frenziedly): It's true! And I swear to kill Señor Brandon and all his family!

With a vicious curse in Spanish he springs

toward Ann — as if to strike her. Quickly Holmes jumps in front of him to protect Ann just as the two detectives grab Mateo securely.

Holmes (turning to Bristol): Inspector, I think we can dispense with his charming company now.

Inspector Bristol: Certainly, Mr. Holmes.

He nods toward the detectives and they take Mateo out the door. Inspector Bristol and the other Scotland Yard man follow. Ann, frightened, sinks into a chair. Holmes crosses beside her and puts his hand on her shoulder. Ann pulls herself together with an effort, and looks up at Holmes bravely and with quiet courage.

Ann: Go on, Mr. Holmes. I want to know the truth.

Holmes: This Mateo is an Indian — there's an element of blood vengeance to reckon with. That's the explanation of the weird music that has disturbed you so — a tribal funeral dirge, and to his mind a necessary preliminary to the ceremonial of murder.

Ann: How horrible! But what did...it doesn't seem possible that Jerrold Hunter should be part of this.

Holmes (gently): Jerrold Hunter had nothing to do with it. As the family attorney, he knew of your father's early . . . (he hesitates tactfully over the word) . . . operations in South America — and of the threat over your brother and you. Whatever he has done has been only to protect you — and to spare you the pain of knowing.

SHERLOCK HOLMES

Ann: Where is Jerrold? I must go to him . . . I've been so terribly unfair!

Watson, who has been watching this scene with mounting bewilderment and resentment, now breaks in:

Watson: But I saw Hunter, myself — closeted with Moriarty!

Holmes: Watson, I'd expect even you to see through that trick! Moriarty went to Hunter with a trumped up lawsuit — to put us off the track.

Ann (deeply troubled): And all those things I've said to him. He'll never forgive me!

Holmes (smiles understandingly): Sometimes lovers are happiest when there's much to forgive.

Watson (cheerily): Don't give it another thought, my girl! I'll go find him for you and bring him here.

Holmes: There's no need for that, old fellow! I've already sent Billy to fetch him, and . . . (he pauses and listens) . . . if I'm not mistaken, they're here now!

The door opens, and Jerrold enters, followed closely by Billy, who comes into the foreground importantly.

Billy: I've brought Mr. Hunter, sir!

Ann (emotionally): Oh, darling! What a blind fool I've been!

Jerrold (gently): It doesn't matter now, dearest . . .

Watson (nervously glancing at his watch): I say, Holmes . . .

Holmes: I know, Watson! You're hungry. A constructive idea! We haven't eaten since breakfast.

Watson (dreamily): Steak and kidney pudding!

Holmes: Ice champagne!

Billy (breaking in enthusiastically): Strawberries and cream. sir!

Watson: At the Savoy!

Holmes: Marvelous, my dear Watson!

Watson: Elementary, my dear Holmes.

And off they go, taking with them the one scene that would have lifted the dark cloud of suspicion from that poor, misguided solicitor, Jerrold Hunter. Is it any wonder that, without it, countless devotees of THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES — myself included — still think he could use a good lawyer?

— Richard Valley is the publisher of Scarlet Street magazine (www.scarletstreet.com) and also a playwright whose comedies have been produced in New York, Boston, Minneapolis, and other cities.





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